Education

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California JOURNAL

Independent analysis of politics and government

1970 25 1995 Public Service Journalism

Inside:

'95-'96 Budget
Allied Business PAC
Affirmative Action

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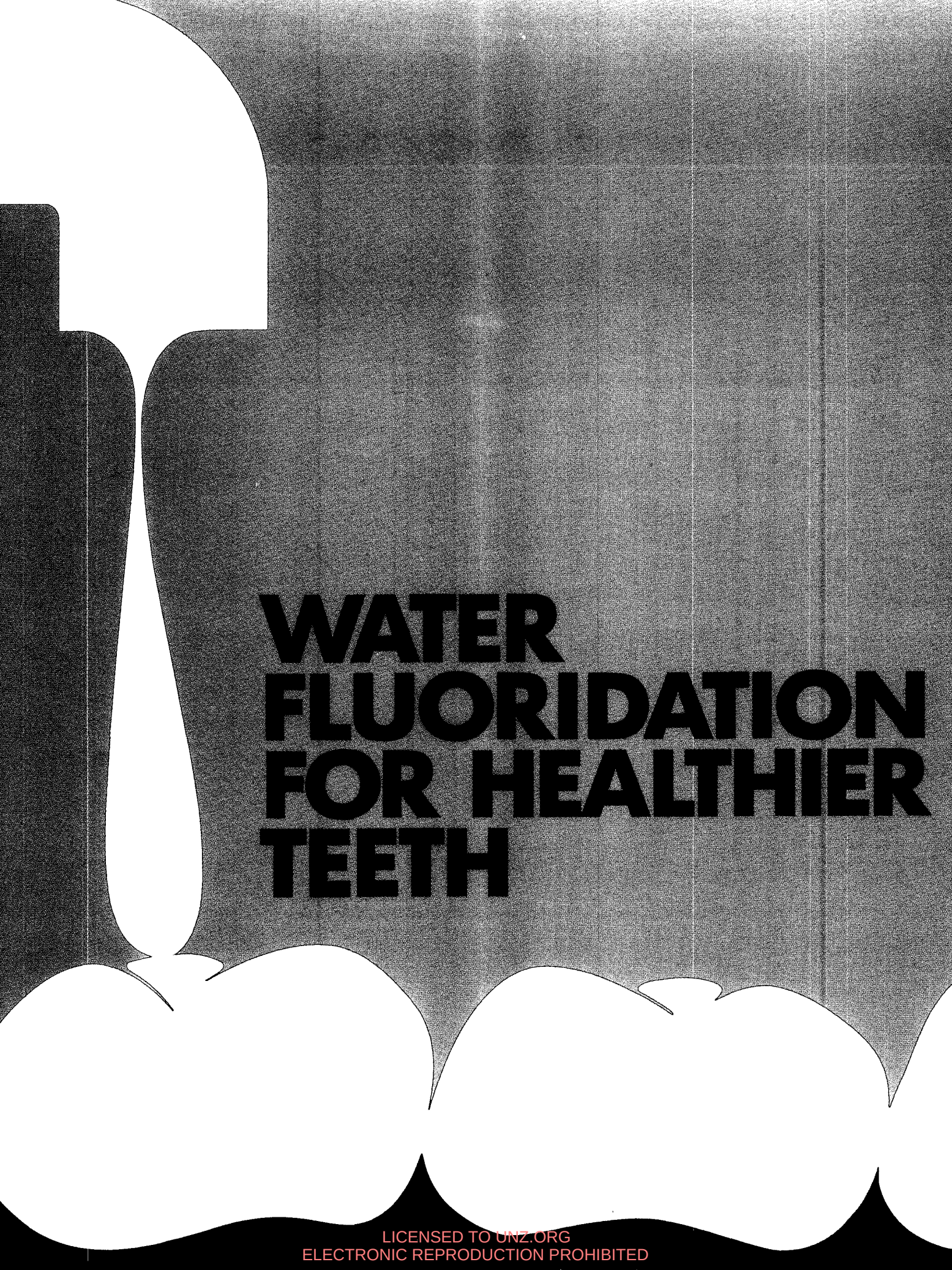

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SEPTEMBER 1995
VOLUME XXVI, NUMBER 9

California JOURNAL

Independent analysis of politics and government

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As an ongoing feature of our 25th Anniversary year, the *Journal* presents essays and articles on issues of importance to California's future. This month, we devote a good portion of the magazine to education.

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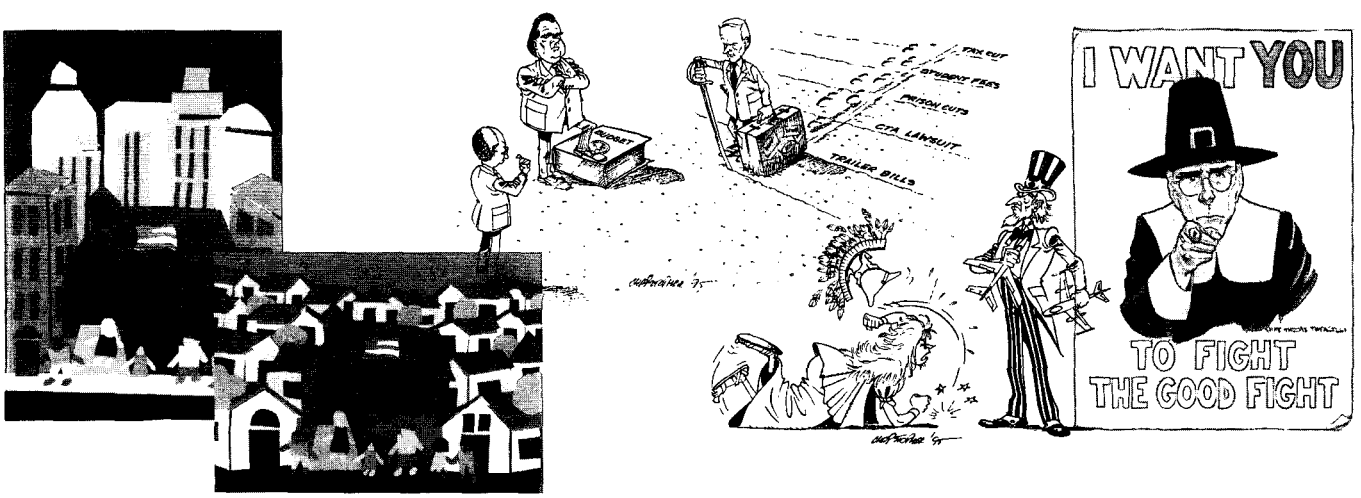

Cover: Typewriter, 1965, by Robert Arneson (ceramic). Courtesy of the University Art Museum, Berkeley. Born in Benicia, California, in 1930, Arneson received his B.A. at the California College of Arts and Crafts and his Masters at Mills College in 1958. He taught ceramics at UC-Davis for 30 years. His work is daring in its provocative "funkiness" and challenges the limits of what is considered "fine art." Arneson died in Benicia in 1992.

The University Art Museum is located at the University of California, 2625 Durant Avenue, Berkeley 94720. (510) 642-1207.

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Up Front

UMBRAGE

Yeah-sure award. When Governor Pete Wilson's tax-cut proposal first hit the Assembly floor last month, Assemblyman Mike Machado (D-Linden) gave what most observers interpreted to be a speech against the proposal. Machado, however, ultimately cast the crucial 41st vote *for* the tax cut when it was heard on reconsideration — the only Democrat to ring up an "aye." Did the fact that Machado will be fighting off a GOP-inspired recall influence his vote? He emphatically says "no."

Suits me. Former Speaker Willie Brown Jr. (D-San Francisco) released his tax returns last month as a ploy in the race for mayor of San Francisco. One of the more intriguing items in those returns involved deductions Brown took for donating some of his famous clothing to charity — in this case, the California Pacific Medical Center. When taking this kind of deduction, the taxpayer may only claim the "fair market value" of the clothing — not the original purchase price. So, how much would the average shopper have to pay for an Armani suit sold off a thrift shop rack? In 1993 Brown claimed that the original cost of the donated clothing was $50,000. And the fair-market value? Try $32,165. That's some kind of thrift shop.

Juice, anyone? Assembly Speaker Doris Allen (R-Cypress) created a nifty new standing committee last month. The official name: "Committee on Government Effectiveness and Accountability." The unofficial name: "Committee to Suck the Juice Out of Just About Everywhere." At a bizarre press conference to announce formation of the committee, Allen suggested that the panel could do just about anything it wanted within the confines of its designated home — the second extraordinary session, created to deal with the Orange County fiscal crisis but since expanded to include mandates to local government. Allen hinted that the session could be expanded *ad nauseam* to include, what? Education reform? Gambling? Tobacco? Horse racing? Tort reform? Oh, and whadd'ya know? Republicans named to the committee included only those who voted for Allen as speaker of the second extraordinary session. The Democrats included two who represent marginal districts — Debra Bowen (D-Marina del Rey) and Susan Davis (D-San Diego) — and one who is a designated elections and fund-raising poobah for the Democratic caucus — Antonio Villaraigosa (D-Mt. Washington). But, hey, as committee Vice Chairman Phil Isenberg (D-Sacramento) said when pressed about the juicy nature of this new panel, "That's ridiculous."

Quote of the Month. Comes from Nate Miley, a city councilman from Oakland, who was responding to an *Oakland Tribune* inquiry into the use of taxpayer-funded cellular phones by city officials. According to the *Tribune*, Oakland pays about $9500 a year for cell phones used by five members of the council, and that the bill includes personal calls for such things as long-distance chats with relatives. Although the phones originally were intended to help reach councilmembers during an emergency, the officials defended their extended use, telling the paper, among other things, that the city has never adopted a specific policy regulating cell phone use. That's when Miley delivered his quote of the week: "Until there's a policy, there can't be an abuse." Yo, Miley: "Until there's a clue, there can't be public trust in government."

Suggestion box. Comes now Assemblyman Bob Margett (R-Arcadia), the newly minted lawmaker who replaced now-Senator Richard Mountjoy (R-Monrovia). Margett admits to being frustrated with "waiting until the last minute" to deal with the budget. In a letter to fellow rookies, Margett grumped about a process that "guarantees ... we will miss the constitutional deadline for passing" the state spending plan. He also expressed dissatisfaction with demands that the entire Legislature wait for "a select few" to make all the decisions behind closed doors. Margett proposed that "budget working groups," made up of lawmakers, begin immediately to toil away on *next year's* budget. Margett didn't explain how those lawmakers should deal in August 1995 with a budget that isn't submitted to them by the governor until January *1996*. Oh, and a special note to Margett: Those "working groups" already exist. They're called Assembly Budget subcommittees.

Whiplash. Legislative session watching is not for the faint of heart, nor for those who don't track events well. For instance, you could have suffered a severe case of intellectual whiplash during a recent Assembly floor session when, on back-to-back debates, the congregation dealt with a pivotal vote on education funding and the pressing issue of regulating nude juice bars.

Anybody listening? Want a disturbing sign that all is not well in Wonderland, that perhaps the public is becoming dangerously surly when it comes to politics and those who inhabit that universe? Look no further than a bipartisan poll released last month and sponsored by the Americans Talk Issues Foundation of Washington, D.C. Conducted by Republican and Democratic pollsters, the pulse-taking found that 76 percent of those asked "almost never trust government to do what is right." According to an Associated Press story, the current level of mistrust and cynicism is at its lowest point since the 1950s — when this kind of poll data began tracking the popular mood. Even Watergate (61 percent negative), the Iran hostage-taking (69 percent) and Iran-Contra (62 percent) produced a better view of politics and politicians. Pollsters said already negative feelings are exacerbated by constant bickering between Republicans and Democrats, and that both parties share equal blame.

"One of the reasons why history repeats itself is because every generation refuses to read the minutes of the last meeting."

— Anonymous

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Rostrum
LETTERS

The cynic's dream

Assemblyman John Vasconcellos' explanations for California's economic, social and political breakdown (see *CJ*, July 1995) fall woefully short. Any discussion of human society must begin with an understanding of the essential human condition. Vasconcellos contends that "evil human nature" is an "obsolete psychological paradigm" and that we must "grow to believe that humans are innately inclined toward becoming life-affirming, constructive, responsible and trustworthy." If he was right, each of us would "affirm" the lives of all other humans regardless of age, race, gender or religion; children would only make constructive comments to one another; people wouldn't drive when drunk; and politicians would be trustworthy. If human nature is not "evil," how do we explain the Nazis, or "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia, torture of Haitians and other peoples? If a murderer is "innately" good, then the murderer's innate goodness was somehow corrupted, resulting in his evil acts. The question then becomes: How does innate goodness get corrupted? Vasconcellos calls this corruption "dysfunctional behavior" and blames "seven convergent revolutions." But none of these "revolutions" — not even their combined effect — holds the answer. Each revolution is merely a symptom, a result of our choices, an indicator of what our modern society is. And "modern society" cannot be blamed for murder, because murder has occurred from the dawn of recorded history to the present day. Such things as crime, violence, addiction, teen pregnancy, dropouts and illiteracy cannot be blamed on society alone. Conflicts occur because people are innately selfish, dysfunctional and corrupt. Although he does not come out and say it, this is the truth which Vasconcellos argues against.

STEVEN W. AUNAN
Sacramento

Spending "cuts"

Regarding "The Bottom Line" column from June, having presented salient data, to wit 36 million in Medicare, costs of $160 billion in '94 and cost growth of 10 to 11 percent (compounded annually), the column glides nicely into double speak by saying that a doubling of cost every seven years is the result of cutting reimbursements rates to hospitals and physicians. The facts are that no cuts are contemplated, only restraint on the apparently insatiable appetite of the hogs at the trough represented by the "powerful physician and hospital lobbies" cited in the column. Catastrophe will ensue if these providers aren't permitted to double their fees every eight years, (the net growth after discounting for growth in beneficiaries). Not likely! Socially responsible reporting would expose the excesses and fiscal mismanagement of institutionalized health providers. My doctor can provide an EKG in his facility for about $65. A block away, in the out-patient clinic of the community hospital, the fee is about $250.

R.A. BLAIS
Cupertino

Welfare reform

You deserve praise for your acknowledgement of the poor (see *CJ*, July 1995). The article about the urban "underclass" and the need for welfare reform, however, is illustrated by photos of people of color. While we have grown used to politicians pandering to racial stereotypes, we would not have expected the *California Journal* to do so. Numerically far more whites receive public assistance than Blacks. According to economist Julianne Malveaux, though they comprise 12 percent of the population, Black people are only about one-third of those who receive welfare. In California, 17.2 percent of adults receiving AFDC are Black, compared to 30.7 percent white. With respect to the authors' statement that in 1992 a welfare mother of two living in California with a federal housing voucher has a tax-free equivalent income of $1817 per month, it should be pointed out that that mother is highly unlikely to have a federal voucher, since California has the lowest availability of subsidized housing of any state in the nation.

EMMA CHILDERS
Friends Committee on
Legislation of California

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The Bottom Line

GOVERNMENT FINANCE

By Susan Rasky

Affirmative action at UC

Two images linger from the now infamous University of California Board of Regents meeting on July 20th (see page 32). In the end, neither has much directly to do with the regents' decision to eliminate consideration of race, ethnicity and gender in hiring, contracting and admissions at the university. But taken together, the images reflect a great deal about the confusion of motive and substance in the emotional debate over affirmative action that now promises to inflame the 1996 presidential campaign.

The first is of faces — Regent Ward Connerly's, Governor Pete Wilson's and Assembly Democratic leader Willie Brown Jr.'s. Wilson looked bored much of the time — except, of course, when he looked smug. He had the votes, after all, and for him the daylong meeting seemed largely a scheduling inconvenience to be endured until he could get back on the campaign trail with a sure-fire issue under his belt.

Brown, with a mayoral campaign of his own underway in San Francisco, seemed strangely subdued. Although he spoke eloquently and from the heart about the discrimination he had faced as a young man, his appeal to the regents to maintain current affirmative-action policies was low-key and narrowly focused. It was, as veteran *Boston Globe* political reporter Marty Nolan observed, the pragmatic approach of a consummate legislative deal-maker, hoping against hope to turn a few wavering votes in his direction.

And then there was Connerly's face, alternately pained and then seething in controlled fury as Jesse Jackson delivered a rambling, biblical harangue in opposition to the Connerly resolution the regents ultimately adopted. One can only guess what he might have been thinking — about Jackson the man, so different from himself? About Jackson the political ambulance chaser, a less subtle and less successful practitioner than Wilson? Or perhaps about Jackson the symbol of the country's bitter racial divide.

The other lingering image from July 20th is the scene outside the regents meeting room. Not the anemic protest march and minor clashes between police and demonstrators that occurred after the vote, but the extraordinary juxtaposition of several hundred uniformed San Francisco cops, Highway Patrol officers and UC campus police standing wide-eyed behind metal barricades watching small knots of peaceful demonstrators wander back and forth across the well-manicured lawns of the UC-San Francisco campus.

It was a perfect 1960's nature preserve, all the more bizarre because the demonstrators were mostly white and strikingly middle aged, while the cops were mostly young, male and female and clearly drawn from every color in Jesse Jackson's rainbow. It's hard to imagine contemporary police forces would look that way had it not been for the very type of affirmative action the regents have now said they oppose.

I should make clear that I have more than passing journalistic interest in the regents' decision. For starters, the regents pay my salary. They employ me to teach the next generation of "media elite" how to cover politics and government. And while I couldn't prove it, I suspect that being female at a time when all of the senior faculty members in my department were conspicuously male only improved my chances of getting hired. But that was before affirmative action officially became what George Orwell might have called an "unpolicy." It also is by far the least of my conflicting interests in where admissions and hiring practices go from here.

The dirty little secret behind the regents' decision — and indeed most of the current debate over affirmative-action policies — is that nothing about the nuts and bolts of subjective decision making in admissions or hiring really changes because of it. Universities have always had preferences, for children of alumni or of big donors, for athletes and heaven knows how many other "special circumstance" cases.

The worst sin is to pretend strict objectivity in a process that by its very nature is idiosyncratic. As a professor, I have had to learn this. Part of my job is to decide which aspiring reporters, editors and columnists will get a coveted space in UC-Berkeley's Graduate School of Journalism, the only such advanced degree program among the nine UC campuses.

The numbers are much smaller, but the basic principle is the same as it is with undergraduate admissions. Once applicants have qualified with a given threshold of grades and test scores, the final decisions about who's in and who's out becomes some intangible combination of negotiation and serendipity that reflects the individual quirks and personalities of the particular admissions committee members.

As a practicing journalist with "connections," a bigger part of my job is helping the young people who graduate from our program find meaningful work in an industry where the pool of talented applicants has always exceeded the number of available positions and where what you know has always been less important than who you know. Journalism is now worse than most professions (including academia) in that respect, but certainly it is more honest.

The true result of the regents' affirmative-action decision is that the university, too, will now have to become more honest about its practices. There will no longer be the same moral imperative, that little click of conscience that says, when in doubt, go the extra mile in recruiting or admitting or hiring someone from an underrepresented group, or at least in acknowledging that institutional bias exists and that there is some personal obligation to compensate for it.

As far as I can tell, nothing in the Connerly resolution should prevent that.

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Inspiring Future Scientists

Lydia Cheng watches as Dr. Laurie Gage takes a sample of stomach contents from a dolphin at Marine World Africa USA in Vallejo, California.

Real Science! Draws Teens to Careers

Imagine your kids switching channels to watch a teen reporter petting a pregnant dolphin, hunting dinosaur tracks in Utah or blasting off for Mars via virtual reality.

It could happen, thanks to a new public television program, *Real Science!* Created by KTEH-TV in San Jose, with support from Hitachi, this fast-paced series features teen reporters visiting with scientists to find out what they do, why they enjoy it, and what teenagers can do to prepare themselves for similar careers.

Real Science! was developed to change American teens' attitudes towards the sciences. Statistics reveal a striking drop in interest in science by the time students reach the seventh grade. Equally alarming, American teens rank behind teens in other countries in scientific proficiency.

Hitachi is helping to reverse this trend by donating use of its TV facilities and committing $90,000 to produce and distribute *Real Science!* Four episodes are currently airing on public television and in schools, and 13 more are planned for the fall.

The show's producer, Maura Daly Phinney of San Jose public television station, KTEH, says *Real Science!* has one overriding goal: "We want the program to encourage students to pursue careers in science."

Hosted by California's 1994 Young Woman of the Year, Lydia Cheng, the series appeals to young people ages 8 to 18. Each 30-minute episode includes segments on three different science careers. Viewers accompany teenagers as they visit scientists, who demonstrate and explain their day-to-day work.

Supporting *Real Science!* is just one way Hitachi fulfills its social commitments. "We want to enrich the lives of young people by giving them fuel for their dreams," said Fred Hansen, executive vice president of Hitachi Data Systems. "Society's future rides on the hopes of today's youth, and we owe them an opportunity to create rewarding careers and fulfilling lives."

Maura Daly Phinney, producer of the *Real Science!* series.

Hitachi's outreach efforts include direct funding of projects like *Real Science!*, as well as donations and employee volunteerism for a host of national, regional and community-based projects. These activities benefit education, the arts, the environment, health care and social services.

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The 1995-96

Governor Pete Wilson kept drawing lines in the sand, and kept crossing them before a 33-day stalemate came to an end.

Even if you didn't have a father or mother like this growing up, you're probably familiar with the type. Every little misdemeanor is greeted not with a spanking, but rather with a lecture on all the sacrifices he or she has made. "I give, and give, and give, and give, and *this* is the thanks I get," they whine. "I slave and slave, work my fingers to the bone," etc.

Although he's never had children of his own, Pete Wilson could probably recite this "parent's lament" from memory today, in the wake of this year's state budget fight. Wilson surrendered, either partially or completely, on virtually every issue of significance he raised when the budget was introduced in January. And his reward for being so accomodating? The second-longest budget stalemate in state history — 33 days — and the forfeiture of a sizeable chunk of prime summertime presidential schmoozing in Iowa and New Hampshire.

Although the bottom line grew by more than $1 billion, the $57.3 billion vehicle Wilson drove off the lot last month was a stripped-down version of the model he test drove last January. As introduced, Wilson's budget was jammed with goodies tailor-made for a GOP presidential wannabe. The gaudiest add-on was a 15 percent, across-the-board cut in state income taxes, but Wilson also promised more money for K-12 schools, corrections, and a boost for higher education, funded in part by student-fee increases at the Unviersity of California, California State University and the community colleges. He wanted welfare spending, including that for the aged, blind, and

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budget

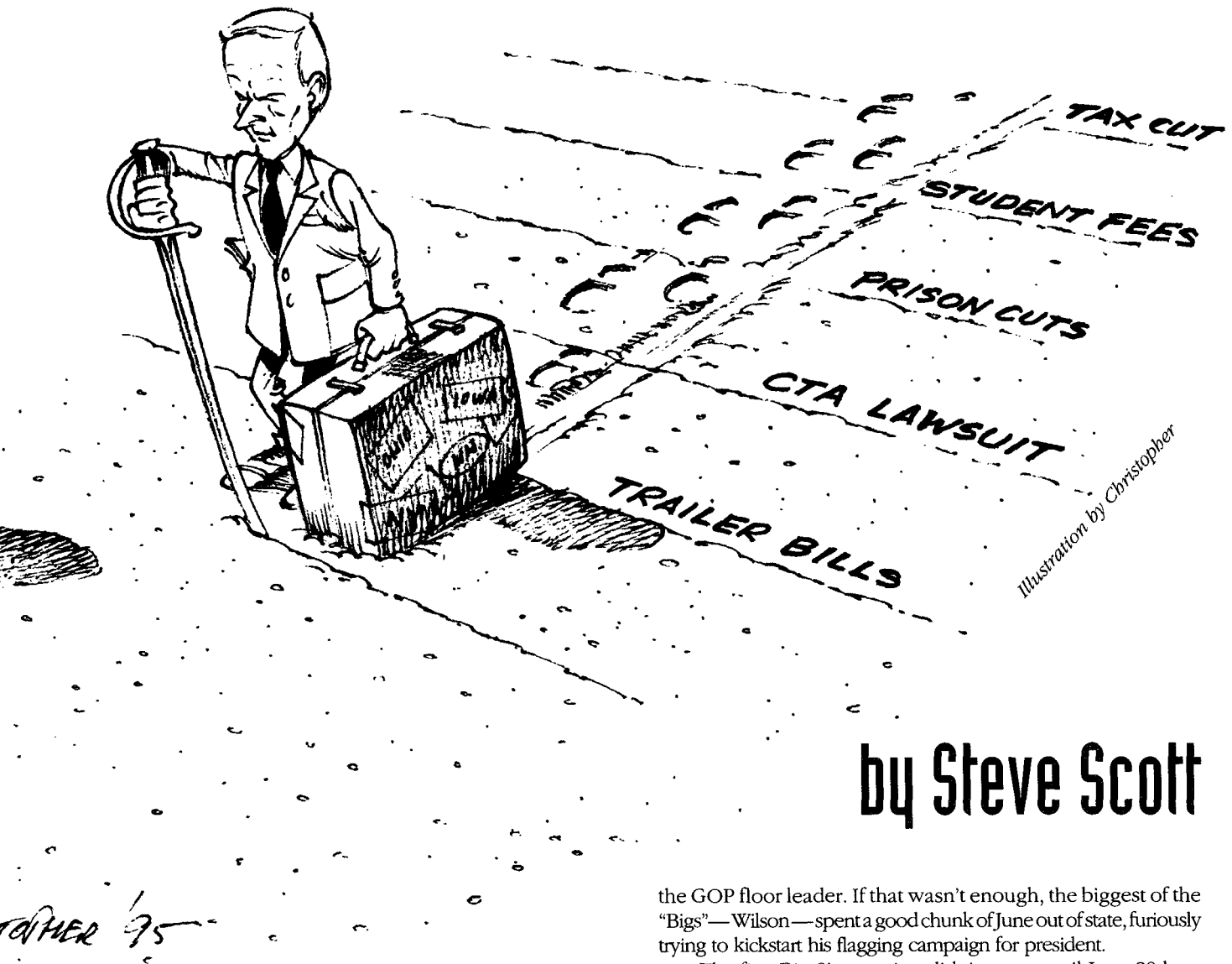

Illustration by Christopher

by Steve Scott

disabled, to be slashed anywhere from 8 percent to 22 percent.

For most of the year, the budget process crept along at a snail's pace, thanks in large measure to the leadership upheaval that continues to wrack the Assembly (See *CJ*, February, July 1995). The divided committee structure in place in the lower house for much of the spring required that the customary two-house budget conference committee be expanded from six to eight members. Partisan divisions prevented agreement on all but the most insignificant spending items.

Under normal circumstances, this would look like a job for the "Big Five" — the governor and the four legislative caucus leaders — but there were a couple of problems. The refusal of most Assembly Republicans to recognize the leadership of Assembly Speaker Doris Allen (R-Cypress) meant that the Big Five had to evolve into the Big Six to accomodate Assemblyman Jim Brulte (R-Rancho Cucamonga), the GOP floor leader. If that wasn't enough, the biggest of the "Bigs"—Wilson—spent a good chunk of June out of state, furiously trying to kickstart his flagging campaign for president.

The first Big Six meeting didn't come until June 29th — two days before the beginning of the new fiscal year. Wilson then went right back out on the hustings, prompting private grumbling from Republicans and gleeful sniping from Democrats. Perhaps the ultimate needle came when Lieutenant Governor Gray Davis used his role as acting governor to confer with legislative leaders himself.

When budget negotiations resumed July 5th, Wilson made it clear he was ready to deal. He almost immediately dropped his demand that the tax cut be linked to the budget, saying he'd simply put the proposal on the ballot if it didn't win approval. When Lockyer and a united Senate Democratic caucus made it clear they wouldn't accept any fee hikes at UC, CSU and community colleges, Wilson dropped that provision as well.

Throughout July, the negotiations and maneuvering proceeded at a surprisingly leisurely pace. Nobody seemed in that big a hurry to settle the budget. One big reason for the relative calm was the fact that almost everyone owed a

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paycheck from the state was still getting one. Only 2500 legislative and administrative staffers were denied their salaries. While vendors and Medi-Cal providers stood to be denied, even they were still receiving payments from the prior year's budget.

With the end of the month bearing down on them, the Big Six finally worked out a tentative deal. By most accounts, the deal-maker was the resolution of the dispute surrounding education funding, which was keyed by the settlement of a lawsuit over past manipulation of Proposition 98. Wilson had proposed setting aside roughly $810 million to repay a loan made from current school spending to finance spending in 1992 and 1993. Those Proposition 98 loans were the subject of *CTA v. Gould*, where a lower court had deemed them unconstitutional.

In late June, the plaintiffs in the suit, which included most of the "education coalition," sent up flares suggesting they'd like to settle. As July ebbed away, the administration decided to answer the call, and the Big Six sealed the deal. An immediate $539 million would go out to schools for one-time expenses — books, computers, deferred maintenance and so on. Another $360 million would be spent in the coming year to help offset previous freezes in cost-of-living adjustments, as well as to equalize funding between richer and poorer school districts. The loans themselves would be paid back, but over eight years, and even with the repayment, the Wilson administration promised that the Proposition 98 guarantee would rise steadily over eight years.

"We get much needed cash for schools now, and stabilize our school finance system for the next five to six years," said CTA lobbyist Owen Waters.

Not faring quite so well were the poor, aged, blind and disabled. The agreement also settled on a two-tiered reduction in AFDC and aid for the aged, blind, and disabled. People in high-rent counties would see their grants cut by 4.9 percent, while those in lower-rent counties would take a 9.8

The Political Ledger

Winners and losers in the budget fight

The budget may, as Pete Wilson contends, be "about setting priorities," but it is also about making trade-offs. Some are driven by policy, but many are driven by politics. Whenever the dust settles after a budget fight, there are winners and losers. Here are this year's.

Winners

• Senate President Pro Tempore Bill Lockyer (D-Hayward). Lockyer was an effective advocate for his caucus, but did so without sacrificing the Senate's traditional consensus-seeking role. Virtually all significant policy concessions made by Wilson came under pressure from Lockyer and Senate Democrats.

• The Senate. As businesslike and orderly as the Assembly was chaotic, the Senate did most of the scut work on the budget, and put up the votes when it counted. Even with nascent internal challenges, Minority Leader Ken Maddy (R-Fresno) managed to get more than half his caucus to vote for the budget.

• The "education coalition." Its tactical retreat from the lawsuit over past years' Proposition 98 loans paved the way for a substantial boost in per-pupil spending, arguably the best education budget in the Wilson era.

• The wealthy. The price Democrats paid for killing Wilson's proposed 15 percent income-tax cut was allowing the 10 percent and 11 percent top tax rates to sunset. In a year where tax relief was a central issue, only those making above $250,000 a year got any.

Losers

• Pete Wilson. Wilson's anxiousness to campaign for president caused him to cave nearly every time he was pressured. He lost on tax cuts, fee increases, state-local realignment, permanent welfare cuts, and on his demand that all the trailer bills be passed. Even his education "success" was forced upon him by a lawsuit that had won in the lower courts.

• Assembly Speaker Doris Allen (R-Cypress). Installed as speaker within weeks of the May revision, Allen was a virtual non-player in the budget game, reduced to taking credit for deals cut elsewhere. She couldn't even deliver the vote of one of her few strong supporters.

• Los Angeles County. The heavy-handed, last-minute lobbying of county officials rankled even would-be supporters. The Big Six offered only token relief, and local infighting scotched another bill that would have helped. A holdout by area Democrats ultimately did nothing but drag the budget out four days longer than necessary.

• The poor and the infirm. While cuts in aid to the able-bodied poor have become budget staples, this budget hits the aged, blind, and disabled just as hard. In certain areas, both abled and disabled welfare recipients will see their benefits go down nearly 10 percent, nearly the same rate at which taxes will go down for those making above $500,000.

In addition to these prominent participants, other players in the budget game fall into a gray area, neither winners nor losers. Assembly Minority Leader Willie L. Brown Jr. (D-San Francisco) has clearly lost a significant amount of influence over his caucus, as evidenced by the renegade Los Angeles delegation. Still, he was able to use his persuasive gifts and the process to secure more than half his caucus for the budget — better than his GOP counterparts usually did as minority leaders. Despite having been embarrassed by Brown in leadership wars, Assembly Majority Leader Jim Brulte (R-Rancho Cucamonga) still managed to bring three-quarters of a sometimes-rambunctious caucus into line, but he had to work hard to do it, and Brown always did much better when he was in the majority. Still, even though neither Wilson nor Brown emerged clear winners in terms of Capitol politics, both got at least one thing they wanted when the budget was signed last week.

They got to leave town to go campaign.

— Steve Scott

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percent cut. The decision to link AFDC with aid for the aged, blind and disabled was unusual — in past years, cuts for able-bodied recipients were considered easier political targets.

"I don't have a problem cutting benefits to those who won't get out of bed," said Assemblyman Tom Bordonaro (R-Santa Barbara), the only member of the Legislature who uses a wheelchair. "I think we should protect those who can't get out of bed."

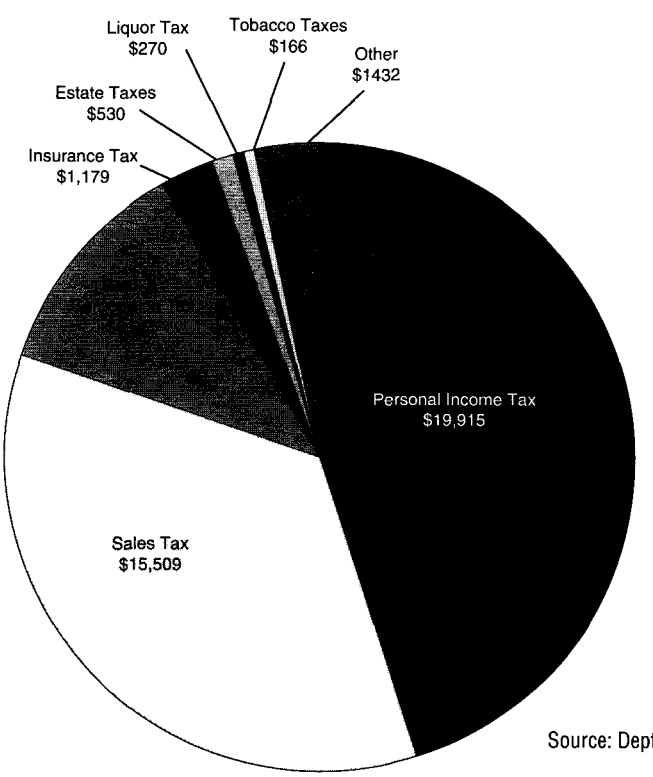
Wilson was so optimistic about a quick ratification vote that he pencilled in a trip to the National Governors Association annual meeting in Vermont, where he'd hoped to cross swords with President Bill Clinton and Senator Robert Dole (R-Kansas) on welfare reform. But legislative Democrats were not in a giving mood. Los Angeles County Democrats immediately balked at the relatively paltry response the budget gave to their county's $1.2 billion budget gap. The day before a scheduled vote on the budget and its accompanying trailer bills, Lockyer weighed in with his view that the welfare cuts were one-year cuts, not permanent. While he swallowed hard on the one-year cuts, Wilson wouldn't budge on Los Angeles County, refusing even to commit to signing a compromise that would have helped both Los Angeles and Orange counties.

Wilson's tactical retreat on the welfare cuts ultimately made the difference in the Senate, which approved the budget and all 16 trailer bills. In the Assembly, the education agreement won passage, but the budget could muster only a scant 19 votes as Los Angeles Democrats joined with abortion foes, who opposed Medi-Cal funding for abortions, to refuse approval. With the Assembly still dithering over Los Angeles County aid, the Senate went home. A compromise with both factions seemed within reach until Assembly Minority Leader Willie Brown Jr. (D-San Francisco) tried to uncouple the budget vote from that on the accompanying "trailer" bills, including the one encompassing the welfare cuts, as well as measures to eliminate pre-natal care for the legal children of illegal immigrant mothers and relieve counties of maintenance-of-effort mandates.

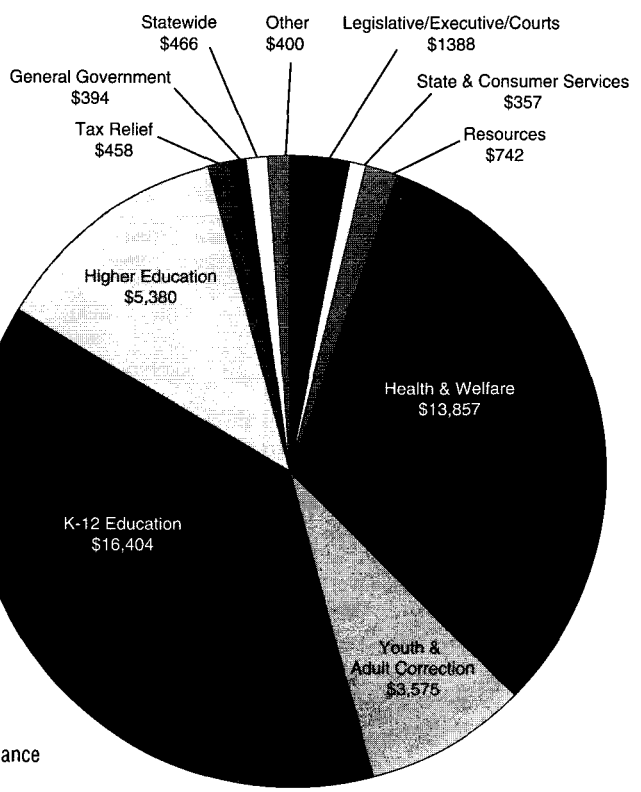
In a floor speech calculated to push every Republican button, Brown insisted that the budget bill be disposed of before continuing with the trailer bills. Wilson was burned by a similar tactic in 1991, when trailer bills important to him were held up in the Assembly. Brown accused Assembly Majority Leader Jim Brulte (R-Rancho Cucamonga) of having an "ego problem" in Brulte's, and Wilson's, insistence on having all the trailer bills passed first. "There's something wrong with your thought process when you don't allow reality checks," taunted Brown. "You're not playing with a full deck on this issue."

Wilson's goat had been gotten. "A deal is a deal," seethed the governor to reporters within minutes of Brown's speech. "The Assembly Democrats are trying to welsh on that deal." When apprised of Wilson's charge, Brown responded in kind. "He is full of shit," blistered Brown. "Do you ever remember me saying that I guarantee Democrats voting for this? Of course not." Suddenly, what seemed to be a budget within reach had become a full-fledged testosterone war. Democrats

General Fund Revenues
1995-96 Total, $44,057
[Dollars in Millions]



General Fund Expenditures
1995-96 Total, $41,732
[Dollars in Millions]



Source: Dept. of Finance

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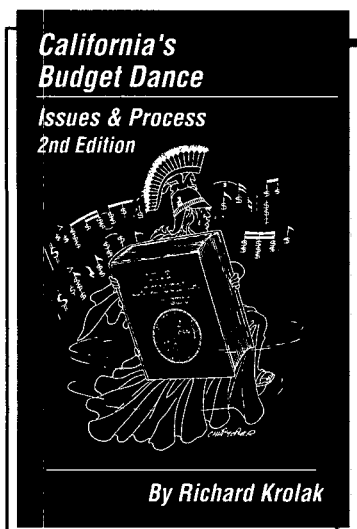
put additional pressure on Wilson and Republicans by helping to pass what was, in their eyes, the most onerous of the trailer bills: welfare cuts.

For the next two days, Democrats and Republicans just stood around, with Wilson refusing to negotiate with the Los Angeles Democrats. By August 1st, it appeared there might never be a budget. Lawmakers spent hour upon hour caucusing, eating lunch, and staring at one another. Late in the day, Wilson announced he would veto a bill seen as vital to Los Angeles County legislators, offering up a "compromise" proposal that Sylmar Democrat Richard Katz described as "insulting." Allen, whose role in the entire proceedings could be charitably described as peripheral, deemed for no particular reason that the Assembly should be locked in. Eventually, the two caucuses were worn down, each side agreeing to give up on their respective holdouts. All that stood in the way of a budget was Wilson. In the wee hours of Wednesday, August 2nd, Wilson blinked again, dropping his demand that the outstanding five trailer bills be approved.



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Issues and Process
2nd Edition
By Richard Krolak

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For Democrats, the budget represents something of an irony. Although the GOP controls the Assembly for the first time in a quarter-century, the spending plan is arguably the best for Democrats in the Wilson era. Per-pupil spending in K-12 will increase by $216, and higher education gets full funding with no fee hikes. Wilson's corrections budget took a $125 million hit, almost unheard of in past years, and the governor was forced to swallow defeat of his tax-cut proposal. The price for these victories for Democrats was the sunsetting of the 10 percent and 11 percent income-tax brackets, a sizeable tax break for the wealthy, and nearly $400 million in welfare cuts.

Still, the passage of the budget doesn't necessarily mean the state is through talking about its spending for the year. State Controller Kathleen Connell says the agreement is perilously balanced, using what she considers to be overly optimistic economic forecasts. If congressional efforts to convert federal welfare payments into block grants aren't successful, or if waivers aren't granted for key portions of the welfare cuts, the budget hole could grow more. Connell says she could be forced to pull a "trigger" imposed as part of last year's budget deal. That trigger would force automatic, across-the-board spending cuts.

"It's a fake budget," said Assemblyman Phil Isenberg (D-Sacramento), who has become the Legislature's reigning fiscal Cassandra.

That warning doesn't appear to faze either Wilson or most legislators. Its passage allows legislators to go home for recess, and frees both Wilson and Brown to campaign for what each hopes will be their next job. It seems that, when it comes to budgeting, most lawmakers take the Scarlett O'Hara approach to warnings of gloom and doom—"I'll think about it tomorrow."

Budget blinders are nothing new, but some worry that the Legislature's penchant for ignoring reality is more ominous in an environment clouded by leadership squabbles and term limits. By most accounts, the ability of both Brown and Brulte to move their caucuses was diminished — particularly Brown's. Two years ago, he was able to cow the perpetually complaining Los Angeles delegation into submission through public and private browbeating, including a memorable speech where he described county officials as "scalawags." This year, stripped of the speakership, Brown was limited to his personal persuasive abilities and deftness with the process. While substantial, they were no substitute for the power he once held as speaker.

And what of the current speaker? By most accounts, Allen's role in the negotiations and the budget endgame was minimal, notwithstanding the best efforts of her surrogates to spin it to the contrary. The only two leaders who clearly proved their abilities to make good on a negotiated deal were Lockyer and Maddy, and even they were forced to massage dissident elements within their caucuses. If, as expected, the importance of leadership continues to erode, history could record the 1995 budget fight as just another sign post on the transition to term limits.

For Wilson, however, all that term limit stuff is a discussion for another day. He has his budget, and is now liberated to troll for votes in Iowa and New Hampshire. His presidential ambitions put Wilson in a giving mood, but Democrats can't get too comfortable.

If things don't go well in New Hampshire, Wilson could be a whole lot grumpier next year.

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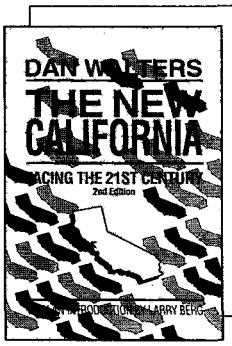

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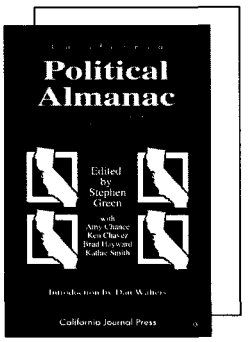

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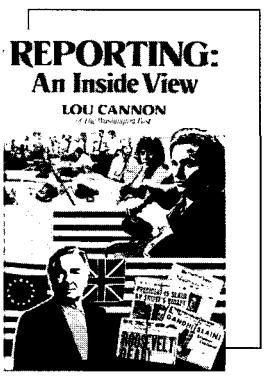

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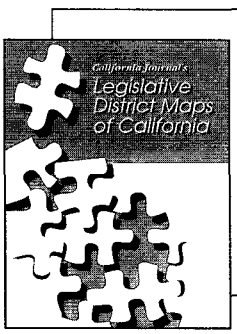

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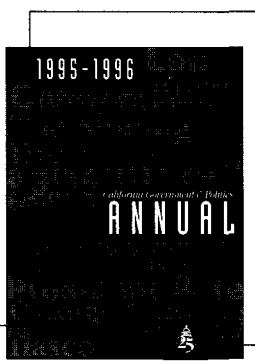

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Dollars from the right

Conservative group is finding that even ideology has a bottom line

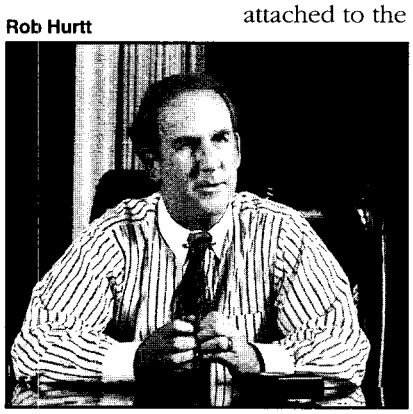
By John Borland

The first time anyone picks up a musical instrument, the results are more than likely to be horrendous. Ask any parent with a child in the school band. But there's a learning curve involved, and the passage of a few years and a little bit of practice will eventually produce something like a recognizable melody.

There's a learning curve in politics too, and the California Independent Business PAC — until very recently known as the Allied Business PAC — has reached the song-making stage. Formed by now-state Senator Rob Hurtt (R-Garden Grove), wealthy Orange County financier Howard Ahmanson and several other conservative businessmen in late 1991, the group immediately became the state's biggest benefactor of GOP conservatives and a lightning rod for liberal criticism. Their early efforts were marked more by purchasing power than political sense, but the PAC is learning the art of picking their battles and targeting their abundant funds to races they have a good chance of winning. There may be no immediate profit in campaign politics, they say, but it still requires business sense to succeed.

The four young women who do the PAC's day-to-day political version of heavy lifting present something of a stark contrast to the group of older businessmen donors. Executive Director Danielle Madison has been on board since the group's inception, performing the jobs of district analysis and the unearthing of suitable candidates. Madison reports periodically to the PAC's board of contributing members, now reduced to Ahmanson; Roland Hinz, a publisher of dirt bike and motocross magazines; Edward Atsinger, the head of a nationwide string of Christian radio stations; and Richard Riddle, owner of a box-manufacturing company. The recent name change was a way of codifying the withdrawal of Hurtt from day-to-day activities and of distancing themselves from the Christian right connotations attached to the Allied name, but the PAC's goals remain unchanged.

Rob Hurtt



The group denies, vigorously and repeatedly, that they are the banking arm of a monolithic religious right. "Religion has never been a prerequisite of the group," Madison says, adding that there are significant differences of opinion even within PAC ranks. She points to Ahmanson, the member most often accused of being the state Christian right's banker for his affiliations with conservative Christian organizations, and notes that he opposed Proposition 187 and does not support mandated school prayer.

"They're obviously religious people with strong feelings," says Ron Unz, the conservative Silicon Valley businessman who challenged Governor Pete Wilson in last year's GOP primary, and a former contributor to Allied's coffers. Through much of last year, Unz travelled to Orange County every month to participate in the group's board meetings, at which they discussed races and candidates. Religion was no more than a very small part of these discussions if it came up at all, Unz remembers. "Really a

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Illustration by Mike Tofanelli

lot of it was political strategy," he says. "Can we win this district? What are the polls saying? Should we put more money into the district? Things like that ... It was never a question of discussing people's religion."

But opponents are far from satisfied with the group's denials. "They were formed to elect Christians to office," says Jean Hessberg, California director of the People for the American Way. She points out that several of the PAC donors have long had strong connections to Focus on the Family or other conservative Christian organizations. "Our complaint is that they're not representing to the voters what their real agenda is." Aside from that, Hessberg adds, the PAC is supported by only the four wealthy members, rather than by the broad-based groups many PACs represent. "That's not really what the political action committee process is about."

With total 1993-1994 political contributions by the PAC and its individual members topping $5 million, Allied far outstripped any other ideologically grounded group. But it is

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the rise of a business-minded, professional husbanding of its resources, as much as the incredible size of its pocketbook, that is allowing the PAC to have an increasingly visible influence on the makeup of the state Legislature.

The 1992 slate of Allied candidates tilted to the right like an upended Titanic, conservative enough on both fiscal and social issues to raise loud cries of an invasion by the religious right. The strategy worked well enough in the primaries, where the well-funded conservatives edged out a competing list of Wilson-backed moderates across the state. But it backfired badly in the general election, and a number of Democrats won in marginal seats that would have been more friendly for moderate Republicans. Allied bettered this record considerably in 1994, spending close to $2.8 million on state legislative races alone and winning 24 of 29 general election races, mostly in the Assembly.

"We didn't do thorough district profiles in 1992," Madison says. She points to the example of Brad Parton, the Allied candidate defeated by now-Assemblywoman Debra Bowen (D-Marina del Rey). "That was a case of trying to fit a square peg into a round hole." A more reasonable look at the district, in which nearly-even party registration should benefit Republicans, calls for an entirely different kind of candidate, she explains. She notes that the district has recently elected four women as legislators: U.S. Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein, Representative Jane Harman and Bowen. "It looks like this district leans toward moderate women," she says.

The group no longer moves reflexively towards any candidate that fits their list of conservative issues. Before going into a race, Madison and her staff will commission a poll, developing a detailed profile of the district and its high-propensity voters. "We'll find out what the district wants," she says. "We'll look at the vote histories going back 10 years or so, and get a good sense of the history of the district."

The histories are particularly useful in deconstructing areas like the Central Valley, which has tended towards the more conservative over time. "We won't go to a district just because it has Republican registration," she says. "We go to districts with a history of voting Republican." Madison points to the PAC's support of Assemblyman Brian Setencich (R-Fresno) last year. "That district has Democratic registration, but their vote history is Republican." In 1992, voters there supported conservative talk-show host Bruce Herschensohn by a wide margin over Boxer, and the district was one of the few in the state to give President George Bush its solid support. "Everyone wondered why I was so adamant about going into that district," she recalls. "They're Reagan Democrats. They're looking for that independent Republican type. Setencich fits."

None of this means the group has moderated its picture of an ideal candidate. The PAC maintains a list of its positions on a number of issues, ranging from low taxes and decreased government regulation to school choice to the statement that "government should do whatever it can to discourage and restrict abortion." But Madison and the four families of contributors have realized that an eight-out-of-eight-point candidate will not fit every district, that there are marginal districts that, if they are to be won by Republicans, must be won with five- or six-point candidates that reflect district voters more than the PAC's positions.

> We'll find out what the district wants. We'll look at the vote histories going back 10 years or so, and get a good sense of the history of the district.
> — Danielle Madison

In most cases, the PAC conducts interviews of potential candidates, looking for someone who fits their district profile. "We'll talk to people, look at who we know, go through word of mouth, sometimes even call them cold turkey," Madison says. But the latter is only a last resort, in important districts that need a strong candidate. "Usually there are too many [candidates]. We need to weed them out, and find the people that fit the district."

Assemblyman Bruce Thompson (R-Fallbrook) interviewed with Allied before his 1992 race. The group did not end up officially endorsing him, but did contribute to his campaign. "They asked me what my positions on business issues were," he remembers. "They asked if I had problems that would surface during the campaign." The conservative social issues, while addressed, he says, were not as prominent as economics, crime and the year's hot topics such as three strikes and Proposition 187.

But not every candidate will go through these interviews. Assemblyman Bruce McPherson (R-Santa Cruz), a moderate for whom Allied produced an independent mailer during his 1993 special-election campaign, says he did not solicit the PAC's aid in any way. "I didn't even know it was coming until it was done," he says. And in his case, the help was not altogether welcome, given Allied's reputation for supporting only the most conservative candidates. "I thought that effort actually hurt me in the campaign," he says. "I don't need their help." He asked them to refrain from supporting him in his re-election bid, and they stayed away in 1994.

Another tool in the PAC's political utility belt is a series of training programs for candidates and campaign staff. The group funds a joint effort in late August with the conservative Young Republican Federation, featuring most of the state's major GOP consultants and a number of national strategists. "We do this because it's hard to keep good trained people on site," Madison says. "There are a lot of candidate training schools, but this is for the campaign team, one of the most important parts of the campaign." The weekend session solicits sponsorships of up to $2000, and charges $75 per attendee. Any funds left over will go to the Young Republicans, rather than back to the PAC.

Allied is one of the few donor organizations that does not explicitly lobby its candidates after getting elected, according to its supporters. Candidates supported by the group agree, saying that they have not had PAC staff knocking on their doors to ask for votes. "I'm surprised that they're not up here asking people to vote against the budget because of the abortion issues," says Thompson. But he recognizes, as do other observers, that the group primarily backs candidates that support its conservative philosophies. "If you go

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through and get good candidates, then there's no need for [lobbying them]," Thompson says.

Nevertheless, some do report feeling pressure, largely through the actions of Hurtt, one of the leaders of Allied until his election to the Senate. "[Hurtt] goes beyond the bounds of propriety in the way he tries to lead people around," says one Republican legislator, who asked to remain anonymous. This influence was particularly felt during the recent speakership battle, he adds. But the same legislator notes that Hurtt's actions are not necessarily seen as identical to the PAC's wishes. "It's not a monolithic group."

The PAC's recent name change has another sidelight. Traditionally focused on legislative races, the group now intends to begin playing on the local level, aiming at developing a "farm team" of candidates for future elections. The move comes both as a response to the opportunities given by term limits and to frustration at past near-misses, according to Madison. "It's partly my frustration ... in finding people with local experience," she says. "It's vital in winning campaigns to have the pulse of the district. And no one does that better than elected officials."

A deep-pocketed group like Allied could be hugely influential in local elections, where candidates spend a fraction of the budget of a legislative campaigns. And the current volatility of local governments — fully half of statewide county supervisory seats turned over last year — provides considerable opportunity for leverage. "It's a tactically wise thing to do," says Senate President pro Tempore Bill Lockyer (D-Hayward), who has kept a close watch on the group since its birth. "Anyone with mainstream or left-leaning candidates should be very concerned."

But local elections do have different rules. For one, the ballots are generally non-partisan. In addition, many municipalities have contribution caps limiting donors to $500 or less. And even if no limits exist, the usually tiny participating electorate in local elections may act as a brake on spending. "The awareness level of voters in municipal elections to outside influence is much higher than in the 60 percent that vote in generals," says Tom Shortridge, a Los Angeles-area Republican consultant. "It becomes politically a little embarrassing if you're a councilman and you get $10,000 of your total $20,000 from Allied."

Democrats note the PAC's increasing success rate and widening scope with a wary eye. Lockyer has made it a point to keep a microscope lens trained on campaign expenditures made by both the PAC and its individual members, and loses no opportunity to publicly underline the group's extremely conservative agenda. Assemblyman Antonio Villaraigosa (D-Los Angeles), a member of the Assembly Democrats' 1996 campaign committee, agrees that information is the best way to fight back. "What will be the key is to show who [the PAC] is and who they're giving to," he says. He acknowledges that fighting candidates tailored to their district will be difficult. But PAC support is ammunition to link even a moderate to a highly conservative agenda, he says. "We've got to tie them to each other."

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Education and the

The state's education system is under siege. Many critics claim that it is failing. But it produces thousands of individual triumphs every year. And its ultimate success is vital to every citizen's California dream.

By Robert L. Trigg

When Naheed Ali arrived in the United States from Pakistan, the eighth-grader spoke no English. This fall, after five years in California's public-school system, Ali will enter the University of California at Davis, where she plans to prepare for a career in medicine. During her four years at Valley High School in Sacramento, Ali not only learned to speak fluent English, but she also earned a 3.98 grade-point average, participated in extracurricular activities, and won a place among the top 10 graduates for 1995.

Ali was not alone in her success. Seven of this year's top 10 seniors at Valley High, which is in the Elk Grove Unified School District, were immigrants who learned English as a second language. Her fellow honor students, immigrant and native alike, are headed to Yale, Spelman College, the University of California and other prestigious institutions.

Is the California dream still alive in our public schools? Absolutely. Just ask Ali, or one of the countless other students who has obtained a good education in those schools. In most communities, you can find strong public schools, hard-working teachers and high-achieving students. Around the state, dropout rates are down, Scholastic Aptitude Test scores are up, and more students are taking rigorous academic courses.

Does this mean we should stop worrying about our public schools? Unfortunately, no. While our schools still offer students a chance to achieve the California dream, students must work harder than ever to achieve that dream, and far too many are failing to do so. In addition to threatening their own futures, this failure — whether you call it their failure or our failure — is threatening California's ability to maintain a healthy, competitive economy.

As a recently retired educator who spent 35 years working in California's public-school system, including 16 years as a superintendent, I would like to offer a few suggestions to those who wish to preserve the California dream, not only for children in public schools, but for all of us.

The single most critical step that the Legislature, educators, business leaders, parents and others must take is to come to agreement on the central mission of the state's public schools. As a school superintendent, my community expected me to provide a wide array of social services in addition

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Robert L. Trigg retired this past summer as superintendent of schools in Elk Grove, California.

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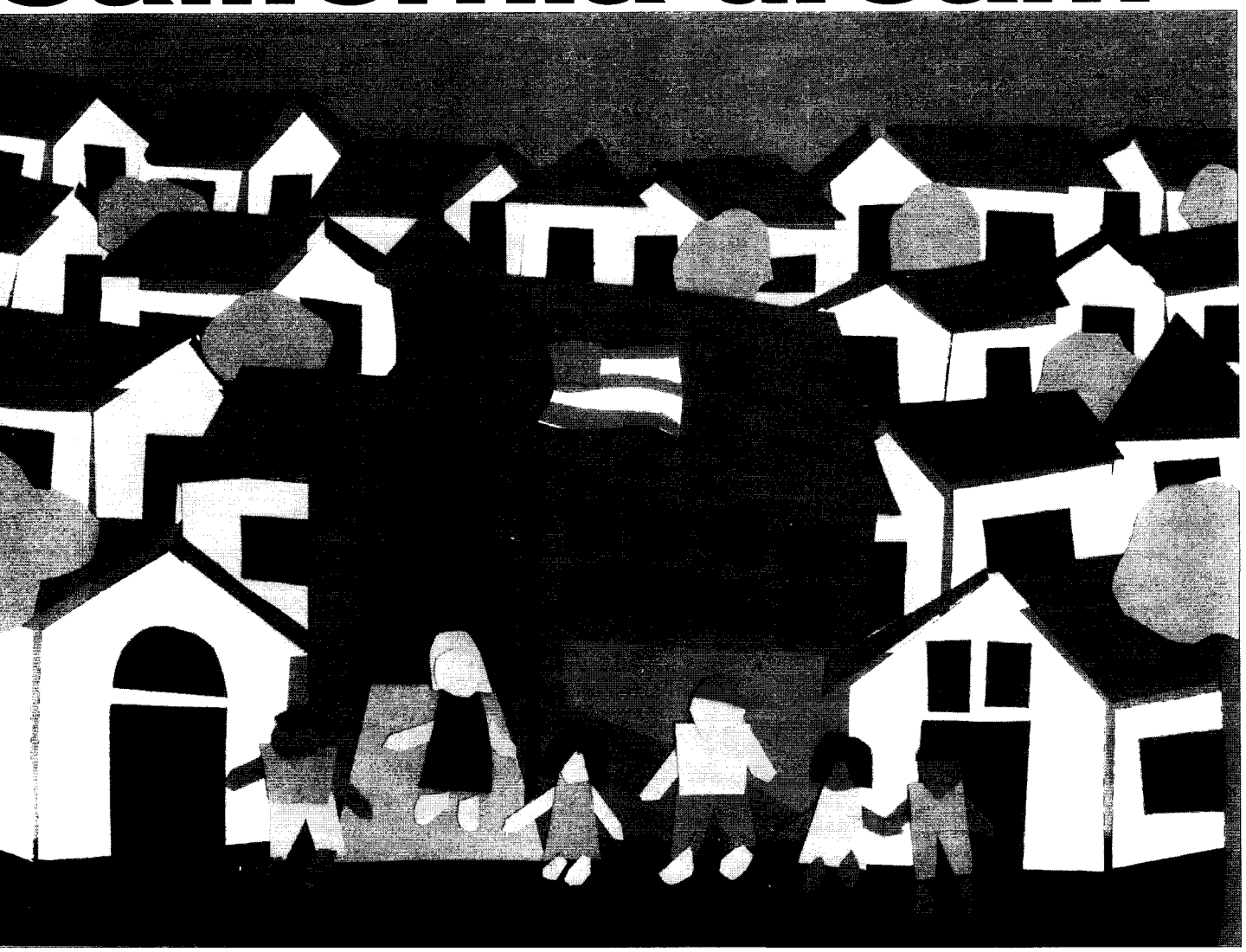
California dream



Graphic by Dagmar Thompson

to teaching students to read, write, think and compute. These services included drug and gang prevention, transportation, sports, family counseling, breakfast and lunch, school police officers, health services, child care, teen pregnancy programs, race relations, child-abuse prevention and more.

Do not misunderstand. We should not abolish these important services. The critical question, however, is: Should schools be solely responsible for providing them, particularly as school funding declines? In many cases, the answer is "no." They drain huge amounts of time and energy away from our primary job: teaching students to read, write, think, compute and be responsible citizens. The Legislature and local leaders must work with school districts to define their central responsiblities and to find alternative, cost-effective ways to meet children's needs, such as Governor Pete Wilson's Healthy Start program.

Instead of doing this, many state and national leaders devote their energies to whipping up headline-generating tempests over fringe issues, such as school prayer, sex education, or efforts to ban particular books. We don't need more press conferences. If we are truly interested in offering every child in California a free, quality education, we need to focus on five fundamentals for every school district:

- High academic standards and accountability;
- Quality teachers;
- Stable leadership;
- Adequate books, equipment and supplies; and,
- Safe, well-maintained facilites with clear behavior standards.

These are the fundamentals upon which good schools are based. Each one, of course, requires involvement from parents and the community. If we can't provide these fundamentals, our public schools will lose more and more middle-class parents who won't tolerate low academic standards, lax discipline, dilapidated classrooms, bare library shelves or substandard teachers. They will abandon the public schools first, taking their votes, their leadership and their high expectations with them. If this happens, we all will

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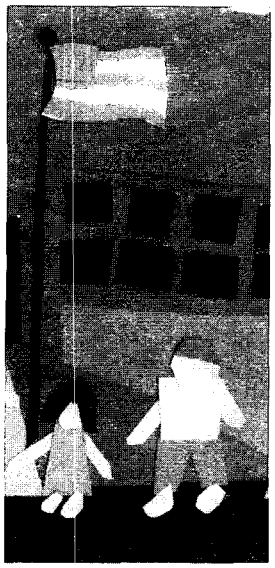

pay a high price, including those who live behind gates and send their children to private schools.

Many critics of today's schools would have you believe that we should return to some golden age in which teachers taught the basics with few frills, and well-behaved students learned all they needed to know. What they fail to mention is that only a minority of students finished high school in the "good old days." Even into the 1960s, few people worried about dropout rates because decent jobs were available for students who left school without diplomas.

Today, the job market has changed, and it has become more difficult for people with limited skills to support a family. According to a recent article in *The Sacramento Bee*, 60 percent of all jobs in the United States were unskilled in 1950. This figure had dropped to 35 percent by 1990, and by the year 2000 it is expected to drop to 15 percent. Our economy can no longer absorb large numbers of unskilled workers. As a result, schools are being asked to educate all students to a relatively high level, not just the top 20 or 30 percent as in the "good old days."

Why is this so difficult? For one thing, schools are struggling to raise standards just as our classrooms are being inundated by growing numbers of children who are poorly prepared to learn. The list of reasons is long and depressing: hunger, poverty, abusive families, violent neighborhoods, drugs, poor health and so on. In 1980, one out of every seven children in California lived in poverty. Today, one in four lives in poverty.

Public schools also are facing a tidal wave of students who do not speak English. Between 1984 and 1993, the number of students in the state's schools who spoke little or no English more than doubled, going from 488,000 to over one million. Another challenge facing our public schools is growing diversity. In 1967, California's public schools were almost 75 percent white. Today, they are about 58 percent minority. By the year 2000, an estimated two-thirds of the state's students will be ethnic minorities. Historically, African-American and Hispanic students have not performed as well in our schools as white and Asian students. No plan to improve our public-school system will succeed if this issue is not successfully addressed. In addition to educating children from all ethnic groups, public schools must help them work together and co-exist peacefully if our state is going to function effectively.

Can we clear these hurdles and offer every child a rigorous education?

In 1980, one out of every seven children in California lived in poverty. Today, one in four lives in poverty.

Yes, if we narrow the scope of public schools' responsibilities and invest adequate resources in the five things fundamental to educating children.

Academic standards: In my experience, large numbers of parents are not beating down school doors to demand tougher academic programs and more homework. Many public schools are already offering exactly what parents want: a safe campus, lots of fun activities to keep their children happy, and a moderately demanding academic program that won't interfere with soccer practice, after-school jobs, childrens' social lives, family vacations or working parents' limited free time. These parents are not uncaring or lazy. They just don't understand that the stakes have been raised for getting good jobs.

With perserverance and leadership, standards can be raised and students can learn more. The Elk Grove Unified School District, for instance, covers 320 square miles, serves 35,000 students and includes urban, suburban and rural communities in Sacramento County. It is well regarded by parents and community members, and it serves a student population that is 54 percent minority. The district's students cover the socioeconomic spectrum from poor to upper-middle class, and they speak 57 languages.

For many years, teachers, administrators, parents and a forward-thinking school board in Elk Grove have worked hard to raise academic standards. Twice in the past six years, the school board has increased the district's high-school graduation requirements, making them among the toughest in the state. While many people predicted that large numbers of students would fail as a result, our research shows just the opposite. Between 1990 and 1994, the district's dropout rate actually declined from 16.5 percent to 9.2 percent.

Accountability must go hand-in-hand with higher academic standards. Our state needs an objective means to evaluate the success of each child, each class and each school. Parents, voters, teachers and the Legislature have a right to know whether schools are doing what they are supposed to do. It is urgent that California select or develop a standardized test that is based on the rigorous curriculum every school needs to offer.

Quality teachers: No single element is more important in a good school than good teachers. Unfortunately, many new teachers know little about teaching reading, managing a classroom, or using standardized tests and other means to evaluate student performance. It is encouraging that the chancellor of the California State University system has hired former state Senator Gary Hart (D-Santa Barbara) to re-examine traditional teacher training programs. No mission should be more important for our state universities than training top quality teachers. And once good teachers are hired, school districts must do every-

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thing they can do to keep them and to provide ongoing professional training. Each of the five fundamentals of quality schools contributes to keeping good teachers in the public system.

In Elk Grove, we worked with San Francisco State University to start our own teacher-training program, using a federal "Troops to Teachers" grant designed to retrain former military and defense workers. Participants in the program, which now is open to civilians as well, spend a year working with some of the district's best teachers.

In addition to school districts and universities improving the programs that train new teachers, every district must make a strong commitment to providing ongoing training for experienced teachers.

If we are going to gurarantee that all children have the best teachers possible, California must give school districts more flexibility. In many districts, employee contracts prevent even minor changes, such as holding parent-teacher conferences in the evening, transferring a teacher from one school to another, or changing a school's daily schedule. Another problem is lifetime tenure, which teachers earn after only two years on the job. This makes it far too difficult to fire a substandard teacher. Like businesses, schools must have the flexibility to change in order to meet their customers' changing needs.

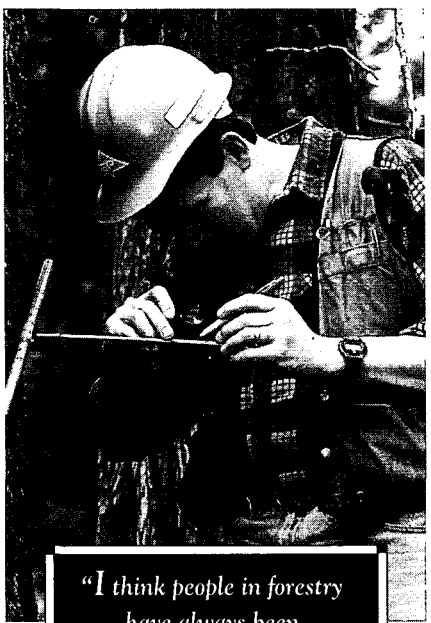
Stability and leadership: In order to succeed, a school district needs stable leadership on three fronts: the school board, the administration and employee unions. In Elk Grove, I was extremely fortunate to work with a board committed to raising academic standards, and with employee unions that wanted the best not only for their members but for students as well. Too many school districts lose sight of academic rigor as they struggle to meet the day-to-day needs of their students. It takes leadership to keep a school district focused on raising academic standards. It also takes leadership to raise standards when parents aren't pushing schools to ask more of their children.

One critical element of leadership missing in many school districts is a strong presence from the business, professional and political communities. It is crucial that community leaders around the state run for local school boards or recruit capable colleagues to run. An excellent example of business involvement is LEED Sacramento — an organization headed by Bernard Bowler, general manager of IBM Sacramento, that links businesses with schools in order to establish academic standards that prepare students to succeed in the working world. Sacramento Mayor Joe Serna, who recently created a high-level commission on education, is another civic leader who recognized that quality schools boost the local economy.

Facilities and behavior: Like adults, children do their best work when they feel safe and comfortable. While we hear a great deal about unsafe schools, the reality is that schools are usually the safest places for children in many neighborhoods. If we want a productive work force, we must continue to address both school safety and the facilities crisis facing public education.

No school can afford to tolerate violent or disruptive behavior from any student. For many years, the Elk Grove

He puts his work to the test.



Stewart Craig knows that becoming a registered professional forester isn't something you learn in a book. It took years of practical experience, learning about the whole range of forestry issues: water, plants, wildlife and logging practices.

"I think people in forestry have always been interested in a healthy environment. And I think we have a lot to show for it."

Stewart Craig
Silviculturist, Georgia-Pacific

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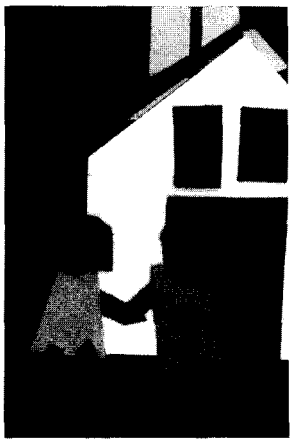
school board has helped keep schools safe by enforcing a "zero tolerance" policy, which means that students who physically harm others, sell drugs or bring weapons to school are expelled — period. And the small daily disruptions that happen in every classroom must be dealt with just as surely. No child has the right to disrupt a class and prevent other students from learning. Unfortunately, too many youngsters, from all walks of life, lack respect for rules or authority. Schools must work with parents to establish behavior standards, and parents must support schools when they enforce these standards.



The other important element in a positive school environment is the buildings themselves. You don't have to go far in California to find schools with leaking roofs, peeling paint and 40-year-old wiring. We also have many overcrowded schools, both old and new. It is difficult for children to learn in dilapidated classrooms that are poorly heated or cooled, badly maintained, or unable to accomodate computers and adequate lighting. It also is difficult to keep good teachers when the working environment is unpleasant. We need to address the facilities issue in two ways. First, as difficult as it is, school boards and superintendents must make maintenance a funding priority. And second, California voters need to approve bond measures to build and renovate schools. School bonds are investments in all our futures.

Books, equipment and supplies: Without adequate books, equipment and supplies, it is tough for a teacher to do a good job. Last year, California spent just under $4900 per student. If we had spent just the national average, schools around the state would have had an *additional* $1000 per child for books, computers, classroom aides, building maintenance and other essentials.

California schools have had to make painful cuts in recent years because their costs have risen while their incomes have stagnated. In the Elk Grove district, for example, we opened a new high school in 1989 and another in 1994. Spending about $20 per book, we were able to provide the first school with a modest collection of 12,500 books for its library. Five years later, an average book cost $28.50, but our funding hadn't changed. This meant that our newest high school opened with fewer than 8000 books in its library.

California public schools and colleges were once the envy of the nation and a strong inducement for businesses to locate here. We can regain that position and give millions of children the chance to become self-supporting, tax-paying adults by focusing on the five fundamentals for quality education: high academic standards and accountability; quality teachers; stable leadership; adequate books, equipment and supplies; and safe, well-maintained facilities with clear behavior standards. Allowing the state's public schools to decline, on the other hand, will cost us all the California dream.

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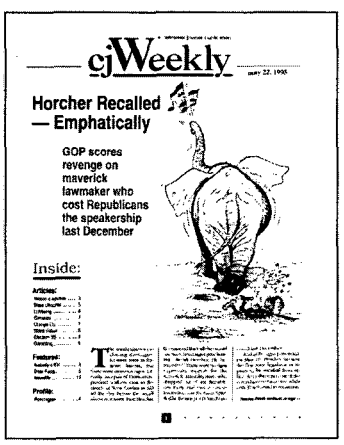
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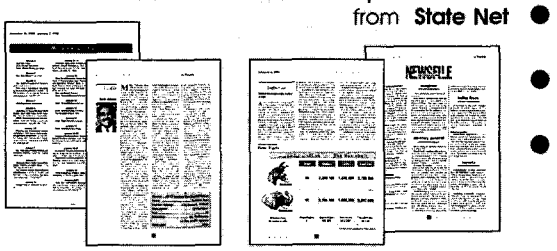

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Southern Exposure
PERSPECTIVE

By Sherry Bebitch Jeffe

Fixing LA Unified

Lost in the fireworks surrounding by the UC Regents' vote to dismantle affirmative action (see page 32) was another decision of significance to California's educational system. In late July, the Legislature passed legislation to ease the way for the break-up of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) into smaller districts.

LAUSD is the state's largest school district and the nation's second largest. It has become a gargantuan symbol of educational failure — low test scores, high drop-out rates, a massive and unresponsive bureaucracy, unsafe and deteriorating schools. Other attempts at educational reform, such as charter schools and Los Angeles' LEARN program, aimed at decentralizing authority, have sputtered. Parents are looking for more — or in the case of LAUSD, demanding less.

One bill, AB 107 by Assemblywoman Paula Boland (R-Granada Hills), lowers the number of signatures required to qualify a break-up proposal for the ballot and removes the school board's veto over such initiatives. A companion bill (SB 699) by Senator Tom Hayden (D-Santa Monica) would require that new districts not be racially, ethnically, or socio-economically segregated. Like the affirmative-action decision, the LAUSD break-up bills reflect the shifting political realities and changing demographics that impact policy in California. They track the continuing tilt of electoral power toward the "First California" — largely Anglo, better-off, better educated, more conservative and more likely to vote.

The break-up movement had its roots in the San Fernando Valley, home of the campaign to stop court-ordered busing in the 1970s. And, indeed, some opponents argue that the real goal of break-up proponents has been to end the voluntary busing of inner-city students to valley schools.

In truth, the valley no longer is an Anglo, middle-class enclave — at least not demographically. In fact, residential enrollment of valley schools is about 70 percent minority. But politically, the valley is still a predominantly Anglo preserve. Its moderate-to-conservative voters have increasingly become a driving force in Los Angeles city and county politics. And they are among the most disgusted with the dismal performance of the sprawling Los Angeles city school system.

It's no accident that Boland, a Republican who holds a valley seat, has carried the cause in the Legislature for years. Hayden is a latecomer to the movement. He now also happens to represent a more moderate district, which contains pockets of valley voters. Hayden's bill — and his impeccable liberal credentials — give Anglo Democrats, similarly impacted by reapportionment, cover to vote for break-up legislation opposed by traditional Democratic constituencies.

Teachers, one of the most powerful Democratic constituencies — and their union, United Teachers-Los Angeles (UTLA) — fought the break-up. Until this year, they prevailed. What happened?

Like the repudiation UC's administration suffered on affirmative action, the passage of the LAUSD break-up bills underscores the political trauma suffered by the state's educational establishment in the era of economic retrenchment and political balkanization. In the past, bills to dismantle LAUSD stalled in Assembly committees, blocked by then-Speaker Willie Brown Jr. (D-San Francisco) — a staunch ally of the teacher's union — and by lopsided Democratic majorities.

Now there is a new political reality in Sacramento. Speaker *Emeritus* Brown is off doing other things, and Democrats no longer enjoy the prerogative of the majority to block legislation. Indeed, a key valley Democrat, Barbara Friedman, joined Republicans to allow the breakup bill to clear its first hurdle, the Assembly Education Committee, where it died a quick Democratic death last session.

In the beginning, forces which ignited the push to dismantle LAUSD — among them, anger over racial integration — were not dissimilar from those helping to fuel the affirmative-action battle. The compromises negotiated on the path to down-sizing the massive Los Angeles school system are what set it apart from the rush to judgment on "race-attentive" programs. But, in the end, mobilizing opposition to the status quo is easy; building consensus on meaningful reform is the hard part.

The turbulent confrontation over affirmative action underscores what it means to live in an era of voter impatience and frustration with all kinds of social and political institutions. The time and reasoned discourse needed to fashion compromises are alien to today's shrill and selfish politics of instant gratification. That fact of modern political life is already taking its toll on the movement to dismantle LAUSD. Citizens groups which fought for breakup legislation are beginning to squabble over implementation. And Latino activists in the heavily-minority East San Fernando Valley are moving to design their own breakup plans because they are skeptical of Boland, who supported Proposition 187 to cut off state services for illegal immigrants, and fear that other plans could shortchange minority communities.

And there are other roadblocks ahead. Possible legal challenges are being contemplated. Moreover, there is no guarantee that any plans making it to the ballot will be approved. When confused by proposals, voters tend to vote "no." And when clout and turf are at stake, the well-heeled teachers' union can mount a powerful campaign — as it did to defeat the school-voucher initiative two years ago.

Where the move to dismantle LAUSD goes from here may determine the future shape of education in California — but nowhere in the legislation are questions of quality addressed. Nearly everybody agrees the school district is broken, but, even after 20 years of debate, it's still a matter of conjecture whether "down-sizing" will fix it. Or what can.

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A dream

Education in urban California takes place in an environment made hostile, not by students and neighborhoods, but by politicians and a media more interested in sensationalism than success.

By Maria Elena Tostado

Educating students in an urban setting is both challenging and invigorating. The joy of teaching exists there in abundance. But that joy is constantly challenged by the politics of California. In California, the mood of our Legislature is extremely hostile towards education, as well as towards those social services that serve large numbers of the urban population.

Proposition 187 — the 1994 initiative designed to deny educational, social and medical services to illegal immigrants — has left urban education's densely populated immigrant neighborhoods feeling oppressed, unwanted, useless and angry. Self-image is vitally important to the mix when it comes to educating students. Anger and distrust do not promote a good atmosphere for learning. Yet, in this state, the richest of the 50, our priorities are not placed on our true resources — the children and young adults who live here.

These young people are our future, and the soon-to-be adults who will be financing generations yet to come. But in this state, we continue to ask schools to do more and more with less and less. We do not receive enough money to implement the new state frameworks nor to keep up with computer technology. The latter is costly and absolutely necessary for our students to be competitive in the job market. The methods of rating our effective teaching also are unfriendly. Instead of checking how many tax-paying, non-prisoner, productive citizens a school produces, schools are measured by standards

Maria Elena Tostado is the principal of Garfield High School in East Los Angeles.

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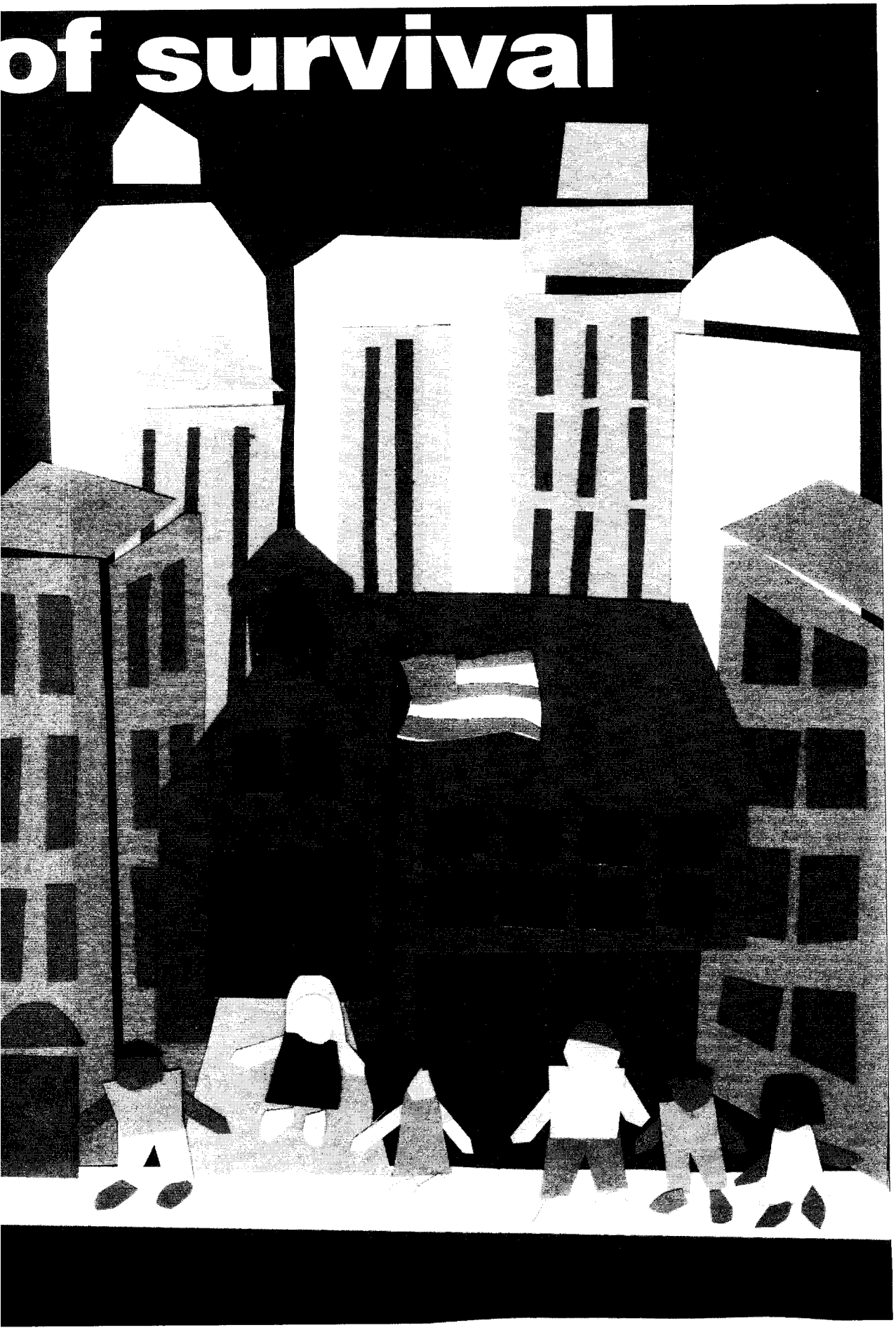

Graphic by Dagmar Thompson

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from tests that are prejudicial and, to most students, meaningless. There is no incentive for them to do well and most don't take the tests seriously.

And then there is the media. Newspapers and television news operations are extremely unsupportive and hostile. They seem always to accentuate the negative and rarely report the positive and good things that happen daily on school campuses. It is more important to report criminal activity rather than creative and intellectual endeavors. The excuse given is that readers don't want to hear about good activities. Murders and mayhem sell newspapers and raise television ratings better than do good, productive student activities. As a result, "education bashing" continues despite obvious successes. Even educators start becoming hostile and negative as they and their profession are demeaned by the media. Reporters and editors ignore the fact that the richest state in the union spends less per-capita for each student than does 41 other states. They ignore the fact that only nine other states spend less per student than California does.

The recent action by the University of California Board of Regents to do away with affirmative-action programs also has consequences for urban schools (see page 32). By eliminating affirmative-action considerations from the admittance process to the university system, regents have promulgated more hostility among urban students. Evidently the regents (and the governor) do not understand the phrase "underrepresented minority." Their actions send signals of approval to corporations and foundations for doing away with affirmative-action programs, and this makes the outlook for urban students — and for future generations — even more bleak.

The state should be grateful and complimentary to schools throughout California. We are doing a great job, despite the hostile atmosphere.

It seems that the Legislature, the governor, the University of California Regents and the media all are doing everything possible to discourage minority urban youth. The hostility is felt everywhere, and yet schools and education remain the only hope for many of these children. The key to the doors of success lie within the walls of schools. California, instead of being proud of the accomplishments of its public schools, continues to do things that make the job of education more difficult.

The voucher system that is being proposed — and was the subject of 1993's unsuccessful Proposition 174 — is another potential erosion of public education, and another difficult hurdle placed in the path of educators and students. There is no question that a voucher system will put more distance between the "haves" and "have-nots" in our society.

In spite of the ongoing problems, the public education system in California is working to educate our youth. New methods of integrating learning and collaborative teaching, as well as the portfolio method of evaluation, are being practiced and work successfully in most of our schools.

Our system of accreditation keeps our schools on a continuing program of self-evaluation, which leads to action plans and to better methods of teaching. These improved methods produce optimal learning environments for our students. The success stories are present, whether they are recognized by the media or not.

Those of us in education know better than anyone that learning and creative thinking takes place every day within the walls of California schools. Our teachers are as dedicated as they have always been and work hard to teach the generations of the future. The state should be grateful and complimentary to schools throughout California. We are doing a great job, despite the hostile atmosphere.

Committed teachers and community schools can overcome hostility, regardless of the source. Our success will be measured by the successes of students who pass through our system. To educate is the greatest gift that can be given, and the joy of watching someone learn cannot be measured by tests or money. These subjective realities are the power of education in California's public schools.

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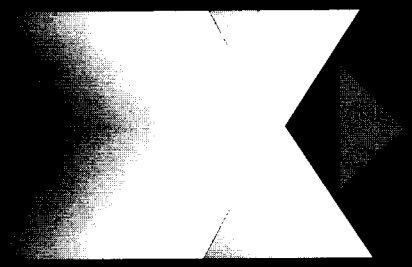
STATE NET  Press

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The California dream of higher education

Throughout the years, Californians have enjoyed unparalleled access to colleges and universities, but it will take a renewed commitment to maintain the dream.

By J.W. Peltason

The California dream has proved remarkably durable. It has survived wars, depressions, migrations, natural cataclysms, social and political unrest. That is because the California dream, like the American dream, rests on the availability of high-quality education to all who want and are prepared for it. For over 200 years, we have built a higher-education system premised on a few simple but powerful ideas: that education would serve as a path to social and economic mobility for those who lack inherited wealth; and that higher-educational opportunity thrives best in a system with a diversity of institutions — from small liberal arts colleges to large research universities — so that students have the widest possible range of educational options from which to choose. Somewhere within our system there is a college or university education suited to the talents, aspirations, income and academic preparation of just about everyone who has the motivation to seek it out.

It is still easier to get an excellent college education if you are affluent, of course. Expanding access to higher education has meant, however, that a college degree is increasingly within the aspirations of the poor, as it has long been for the rich. There's nothing surprising about the fact that it is possible to go to Harvard or Yale and end

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J.W. Peltason is president of the University of California. He is scheduled to retire in October 1995. Patricia A. Pelfrey assisted in the preparation of this essay.

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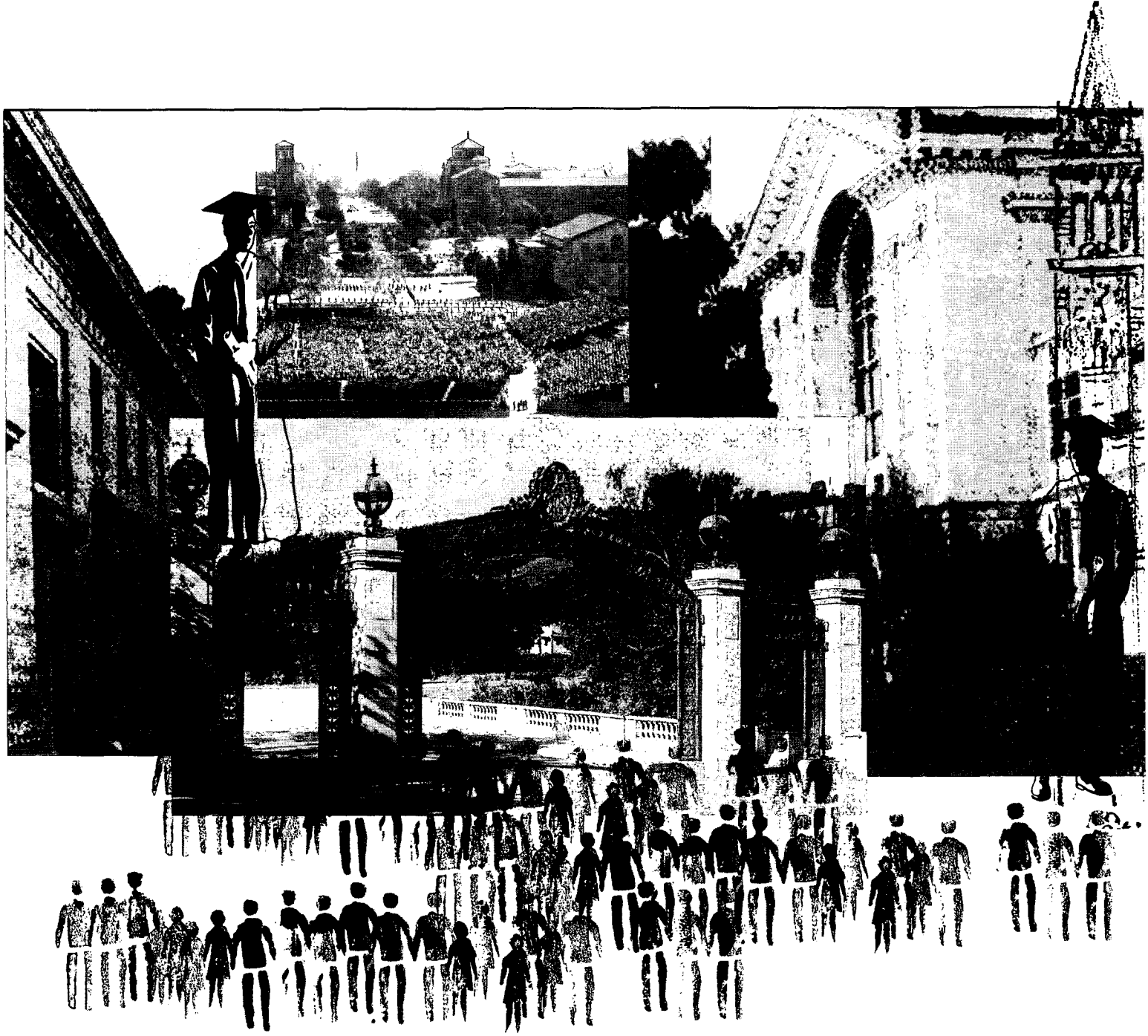

up as president of the United States. What is surprising, and what sets this country apart, is that it also is possible to go to Whittier or Elmira or Southwest Texas State College and be elected president. The American system of higher education would not score high on orderliness or organization, but it has succeeded beyond the imagination where it counts — in providing social and economic mobility, not to mention such intangibles as productive and rewarding lives for more and more people.

No state has demonstrated a clearer understanding of these realities than California. We have consistently encouraged our public universities to be as excellent as our private institutions. The celebrated 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education made that aspiration possible by reorganizing California's public colleges and universities into a coherent system that emphasized quality and discouraged unproductive competition, while promising a place to any California student with the talent and motivation to benefit from higher education. The Master Plan has been, by just about any measure, an outstanding success. The University of California can carry out its special missions of providing instruction at the doctoral level and of producing the knowledge upon which our economic future depends because the California State University and the community colleges do such a splendid job of fulfilling their special roles. Our strong system of independent colleges and universities offers its own array of excellent educational options. As a result, more than any other society in the world, California has made good on the promise of educational opportunity for all of its citizens.

The system is still working, but today the doors of opportunity are beginning to close. They are closing with little public debate and less public understanding of the drastic consequences for California. Several trends threaten our system of higher education and although they are national in scope, as in so many other ways, change comes first to California.

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First is the chronic underfunding of higher education. The fiscal problems facing California higher education today are more serious than those we faced during the Great Depression. Steep declines in support have occurred not because our leaders will it but because of a combination of constitutional requirements, federal mandates and expenditures for public safety that drain resources away from higher education. More than 85 percent of the state budget is protected by constitutional or statutory provisions that may only be altered by changing the law. UC, along with CSU, has the unfortunate distinction of being part of the unprotected 15 percent of the budget.

As a consequence, the share of the budget devoted to UC and CSU has declined from 13 percent in the late 1960s to 8 percent today. Unless something is done to reverse the trend, that figure will continue to decline as each year the percentage of the budget available to support higher education becomes smaller and smaller. And this is happening at a time when we are on the cusp of a reduction in federal funding for research and student aid that is so massive that it could dwarf even the radical cuts in state support we have faced over the past five years.

Solutions to the state's severe budgetary and structural dilemma have been proposed but as yet none has been adopted. The California Constitutional Revision Commission, appointed jointly by the governor and Legislature in 1993, has the formidable challenge of proposing answers to California's budgetary gridlock. The commission has released its preliminary report, and its recommendations deserve close attention by the people. The stakes are high.

Unless decisive action is taken, the long-term consequences for higher education are clear. As the California Postsecondary Education Commission put it in its report, "Challenge of the Century," public insistence that priority be given to corrections and other state activities at the expense of education means that "more criminals will be in prison, and more students will be denied college." The irony is that it is much cheaper to send someone to college than to prison; it costs over $20,000 a year to keep someone in a California state prison, while it costs little more than $12,000 annually to pay for the housing and education of a UC student.

The second trend is related to the first. A tidal wave of criticism is engulfing higher education. Even foundation heads, traditional boosters of higher education, are joining the chorus. The list of complaints is long and, if you are a college or university president, painfully familiar. There is no vision in higher education, critics say, no long-term planning, no coming to terms with the changed fiscal environment facing higher education. In particular, there are no proposals for fundamental change in the state's public universities. If professors would do less research and teach more, if fewer administrators would accomplish more, if unnecessary schools and departments and specialties were eliminated, if the various higher-education segments would cooperate more, if thousands of students were taught via distance technology and persuaded to graduate in three years rather than four, if enrollment projections were better and more consistent, then higher education's problems would be solved.

There is much to be said for a number of these proposals. Most of them already are being examined and many of them are being implemented. Some seem to miss the point, such as the assumption that research and teaching occur only at the expense of each other when every survey at UC shows that more than 70 percent of our students believe they have received a good to great education in our research-oriented environment — a record unrivaled by most human institutions, including marriage.

It should also be noted that in the contest for media attention, what we do systematically and well oftens loses out to the colorful anecdote. On an average day at UC, 160,000 students attend class unreported. One takes off his clothes, and the next day it is the "naked guy" we read about.

We will never purge our institutions of all their human and organizational imperfections, and it is not clear that it would be a good idea if we could. The worry is not the existence of criticism — which no public institution can or would expect to be exempt from — or individual criticisms themselves, some of which are true. The worry is that critics of higher education seem to have captured public attention and the public imagination. Much of their criticism is dramatically overstated and venomous in tone. But it is coming from people with tremendous influence on public perception and policy.

This criticism has not yet undermined public confidence in higher education, which still is highly sought after by parents for their children. But it has clouded and sometimes confused the public dialogue on higher education's future. That dialogue has yet to reach the level of accuracy, thoughtfulness and respect for opposing views that the subject itself deserves.

The third potentially damaging trend for higher education is what might be called the "illusion of the quick fix." There is growing support, among critics and the public, for the idea that planning will bridge the gap between what we give our colleges and universities and what it costs them to educate the young and discover new knowledge. It is a matter of vision and will, it is said, and the determination to make fundamental changes in the American university.

We will never purge our institutions of all their human and organizational imperfections, and it is not clear that it would be a good idea if we could.

Universities are complex institutions that are built for the centuries. Major change tends to be incremental, not revolutionary; universities have survived as well as they have because they have not transformed themselves with every passing trend. But they must — and do — respond to the

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society that supports them. The very nature of what they do requires them to assess regularly changing demographic, economic, educational, public policy, and a host of other trends. This includes, of course, the likelihood of long-term resource constraints. Obviously, the transition to this new and difficult environment won't happen without will and vision and much more, but it also won't happen without minimal resources to pay the costs of educating the next generation, in addition to the other things that higher education does for California. The postsecondary education commission estimates that over the next 10 years, some 455,000 additional students will knock at higher education's doors, including an increase of 32,000 students for UC. Although UC's estimates are lower, they still are significant. The commission also anticipates that California's public institutions will need $1 billion more per year over the next 10 years to pay for new construction, repair and maintenance of existing buildings, and equipment.

Clearly, higher education in the next century will not have the resources per student that it has had in this one and will have to learn how to be more efficient and effective. But there is no way higher education can plan itself out of this budgetary straitjacket. California's public colleges and universities have made enormous efforts, in some cases with remarkable success, to increase support from private and other alternative sources. They have reluctantly raised student fees. They also have made draconian cuts in libraries, laboratories, maintenance of campus grounds and buildings and, most of all, in their people. There is no more fat to cut.

And although there is increasing discussion of privatization of professional schools within public universities or even the universities themselves, there are definite limits to that option. Increases in private gifts and research funding are helpful, but they will never bridge the funding gap. The state's share of UC's total budget, for example, has dropped in recent years until today it constitutes on 24 percent. But to say that state funding constitutes only 24 percent of our budget is like saying that your heart constitutes only 24 percent of your body. State dollars pay for the core educational activities that are at the heart of everything we do and that make every other activity possible. And no matter how small a proportion of our budget state dollars becomes, we will remain accountable to the people of California and to their elected representatives.

I also am skeptical of what may be called the "technology fix." Perhaps the most popular form of this idea is the virtual university — shorthand for the use of informational and other technologies to substitute for the traditional labor-intensive process of teaching and learning. The more enthusiastic among us even believe that the university as a physical place will wither away as information and instruction speed along the Internet to anyone who wants to take advantage of them.

Informational and similar technologies offer wonderful possibilities for expanding the scope and efficiency of teaching and research. Just as the invention of the book had a revolutionary impact on the teaching and learning process, so will the computer. We are experimenting with some of those possibilities within UC, and in cooperation with other educational institutions.

But as Stanford President Gerhard Casper has argued, in weighing the advantages of the virtual university, we also must consider "what learning and which skills can *not* be taught at a distance." Students and teachers will continue to need to get together. Despite the fact that, in the future, knowledge will be dispersed and readily available on CD-ROMs, there still will be the human and social need to meet for face-to-face confrontations, intellectual stimulation and social intercourse. Knowledge can be transmitted by a cable, but wisdom is acquired in social contexts.

Informational technologies and distance learning are not inexpensive, moreover, and the initial investment is the least expensive part of it. Nor will technology make the traditional classroom obsolete. The invention of the book and the creation of the library didn't make professors obsolete or education less expensive; they merely gave professors and students new tools for learning. The essential functions universities perform have remained intact over the centuries and will remain so into the future.

It also is worth noting that when some people talk about delivering education inexpensively through distance learning, they generally have in mind the education of other people's children; for their own, they seem to prefer traditional, residential face-to-face experience. It always is tempting to look for money saving ways for everyone else's kids to go to college. But the reality calls for something more from all of us.

The trends described here are exerting increasing pressure on our colleges and universities. Even more serious is the tremendous strain they impose on California's longstanding social consensus that public universities should be as good as private ones. The danger is that public higher education will gradually evolve into a two-track system, as has happened in many places with respect to K-12 education. If public education is allowed to drift into mediocrity, those with resources will send their children to private colleges and universities, just as they have moved their children at the lower grades into either suburban or private schools.

It must be emphasized that the governor and Legislature, despite recessions and a declining share of the state's general fund available for higher education, have buffered us from the worst consequences of California's fiscal crisis. And for the moment, at least, there are some hopeful signs. I am very much encouraged by the four-year compact Governor Pete Wilson announced in January. Through a combination of a modest increase in tax dollars and reasonable fee increases, coupled with additional aid to needy students, the compact will stabilize higher education during the next four years and give us the chance to make the changes we will need to move into the next century.

Important as it is, however, stability isn't enough. As earlier generations of Californians have done, we must invest in our future. And for the first time in a long while, California is not getting ready for the next generation.

The Master Plan hasn't failed. Our colleges and universities, despite their imperfections, haven't failed either. What has failed is public understanding of the unyielding fact that we can't go on simultaneously insisting on more prisons and refusing to pay for them through increased taxes. As a result, we are depriving ourselves of the chance to build California's infrastructure, including the educational infrastructure that has helped make this state into the sixth-largest economy in the world. We are asking our colleges and universities to run on empty. If we don't begin questioning our willingness to live with this situation, it will not be long before California and the California dream both will be going nowhere.

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Affirmative action and the UC vote

Presidential politics put regents in the national spotlight and on the spot for a vote to end racial preferences.

It's rare that those who take opposite sides of a disagreement claim the same battle cry, but that's what seems to have happened in the politically charged debate over affirmative action — particularly in the case of the recent University of California Regents' decision to abolish affirmative-action policies within the university system. Both supporters and opponents said they were rallying for "fairness" — in other words, a system that does not discriminate based on the color of one's skin. For many who attended and many more who observed last month's bitter 12-hour debate on the issue before the UC Board of Regents, the issue wasn't one of race, ethnicity or economic background. In their minds, to re-work a Mae West aphorism, "Fairness had nothing to do with it."

Politics did.

According to many observers, and some regents, the political circus surrounding the meeting itself was unfair — to the board. There was anger at how a customarily apolitical board had been hijacked to become a forum for a major national identity crisis. There was anger at the way supporters and opponents of affirmative action tried to browbeat them with warnings, protests and even bomb threats. And there was more than a little anger at the man whose ambitions had thrust them into this acrid political miasma: Governor Pete Wilson.

As the state's chief executive, Wilson is automatically a member of the Board of Regents — indeed, he has the right to preside over any meeting he attends. For the last three years, however, Wilson has eschewed that right. What drew him to last month's meeting were two resolutions, sponsored by his longtime friend and financial supporter Ward Connerly, a Sacramento consultant who is African-American. The first sought to end affirmative action in university admissions; the second in its hiring policies. Although Connerly began his crusade to end affirmative action long before Wilson announced for president, the governor has gained much mileage from the issue, and the meeting was held only one day after President Bill Clinton delivered a major national address in which he defended affirmative action.

It was clear from the get-go that Wilson intended to gain even more mileage from the regents' meeting. There were only slightly fewer television cameras than cover a Simpson trial press conference, and reporters had come from as far away as Great Britain. The atmosphere was made even more politically charged by the presence of a former Democratic presidential candidate who is himself eyeing another run — the Reverend Jesse Jackson. Jackson, in what one observer described as his "getting

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Illustration by Christopher

arrested clothes," energized public opposition to the affirmative-action proposals and pleaded with regents to reject them.

The deck seemed stacked against opponents from the start. Nineteen of the regents are appointed by the governor (the remaining six serve because they hold some other elective office), and 17 of the 19 appointed regents currently owe their regency to Republican governors. Most have been reappointed by Wilson after their first terms expired. Although the position is unpaid, it bestows a great honor on those who sit on the board.

The meeting opened with a host of legislators reminding the regents of the event's importance. Former Assembly Speaker Willie Brown Jr. (D-San Francisco) asked them to "be responsive to the people of the state of California." Senator Bill Leonard (R-San Bernardino) spoke in favor of the proposal, then noted that he would "oppose any legislative attempts to punish the UC system or its students" — regardless of the regents' final decision. Assemblyman John Vasconcellos (D-Santa Clara) implored the panel to "please, take your time," echoing the sentiments of others who argued

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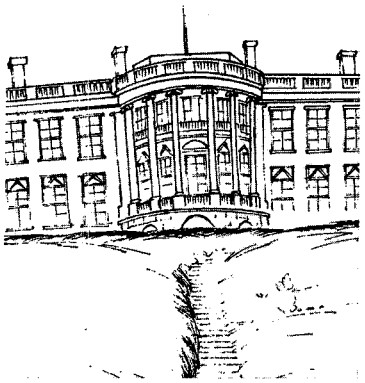


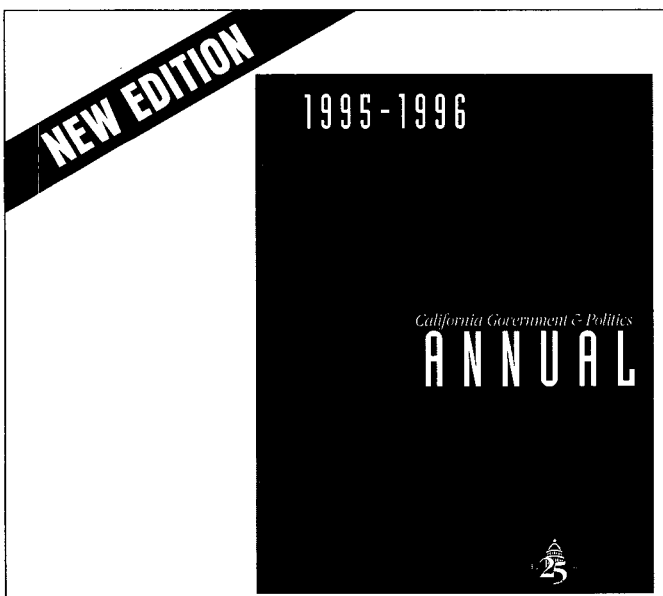
that there was no real reason to rush a decision. Assemblyman Phil Isenberg (D-Sacramento) said that regents did not have enough information at their disposal. And then there was the entire university hierarchy, from UC President Jack Peltason down through the nine campus chancellors to the Academic Senate and to a host of individual professors and student leaders — all of whom opposed the proposals.

For his part, Wilson dismissed notions that his efforts to abolish affirmative-action programs were motivated by anything but the best interests of the university. Yet the governor seemed less than interested in how the final decision might affect another critical issue facing regents — the selection of a new president to succeed Peltason, who is retiring in October. Critics, including Peltason and Regent Roy Brophy, head of the presidential search committee, have speculated that approval of the resolutions will make it harder to recruit a university chief. When pressed to respond to rumors that some candidates already have said they would pull out of the nominating process should the proposals pass, Wilson appeared indifferent. "I don't think that's true, because nobody is in a position to [say] that," Wilson told the *Journal*. "If it *is* true, then [candidates] *should* pull out."

The political nature of the debate, and the ramifications inherent in the growing perception that regents had bowed to political pressure, split even those appointed to the board by Wilson. Dean Watkins, a wealthy Southern California businessman, fell in behind the governor, saying at one point that "I follow my leader." On the other hand, Brophy — described by friends as a stalwart Republican — voted against both proposals and took the unusual step of addressing regents as a private citizen. Brophy, who has felt personally responsible for recruiting a new president, expressed his deep disappointment that the university was being dragged through a political swamp.

"Years ago, I would have assumed that [Brophy] would side with the governor, but ... he stood up as a citizen and said he was ashamed of the regents," said fellow Regent William Bagley, who abstained from the admissions resolution. "That was a very forthright statement, and in my mind, he's my hero."

While Bagley denies he was personally lobbied for his vote, it seemed clear that political pressure was brought to bear on other participants. Brophy publicly decried lobbying and several others suggested privately they'd been contacted about the vote. Regent Meredith Khachigian, wife of longtime Wilson supporter Ken Khachigian, was one of those who seemed uncomfortable being forced to make a choice. "It's not a clear-cut issue; some have clearly made their decision, but all the rest of us are fighting with it," she noted before the vote was taken. "There is no doubt [our



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decision] will have a tremendous impact." At the time, Khachigian wouldn't say which side she had chosen, but three hours later, she delivered a speech in favor of the proposal and cast an "aye" vote. When it was finally over, she left the room in tears.

"I didn't make phone calls or ask people [how they would vote] before the meeting, but it was pretty evident by putting a sensitive finger to the political wind ... there were several regents who were worried about the politicization of the process," said Bagley. "I was disappointed in them, disappointed that those people helped pass the resolution. They are the ones who should have stood up for the university."

If, as seems clear, regents were lobbied on the issue, the lobbying paid off. The board voted 14-10 to end affirmative action for admissions (with one abstention), and 15-10 to end it for hiring and contracting. Assembly Speaker Doris Allen (R-Cypress), who also sits on the board, was absent.

The vote was a badly needed attention getter for Wilson's presidential campaign. Coming one day after his nationally televised response to Clinton's speech, Wilson's blunt-but-effective presentation cemented his place as the national respondent to Clinton on the issue of race- and gender-based preferences. "It is a two-person debate on this issue," said political analyst Sherry Bebitch Jeffe. The Washington-based pundit corps, keepers of the conventional wisdom, viewed Wilson's performance as his ticket to the coveted "first tier" of presidential candidates. In the aftermath of the regents' vote, Wilson made the talk-show rounds, getting into the kind of heated on-camera exchanges with Jackson that make GOP political pros salivate.

"Taking Jesse Jackson and Bill Clinton on at the same time elevated his stature considerably," said GOP political consultant Sal Russo.

In the days and weeks following the affirmative action vote, however, Wilson had reason to withhold a declaration of total victory. Public opinion surveys conducted at the height of the controversy showed an overall majority of people more inclined to support Clinton's "mend it, don't end it" approach. Two prominent Republican conservatives — former HUD Secretary Jack Kemp and former Education Secretary William Bennett — accused Wilson of fanning racial fears in his tirades against "reverse discrimination." Bennett publicly detailed Wilson's recent conversion on the issue, using ammunition thoughtfully provided by the Clinton White House.

Perhaps most embarrassing for Wilson was the pronouncement from Richard G. Butler, a leader in the neo-Nazi White Aryan movement. Speaking from a hate-fest in Idaho, Butler said Wilson is "beginning to wake up." Wilson's spokes-people quickly dis-

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tanced themselves from the comments, emphasizing Wilson's continued insistence on tough enforcement of anti-discrimination laws. Still, a *New York Times* photo of the Nazi gathering with the quote praising Wilson took a little of the joy out of the victory.

"It is in our long-term interests as a party to address some of these issues in a way that makes people feel a part of us," concedes Russo, a Wilson supporter. "The tone of the affirmative action discussion can get us off in the wrong direction."

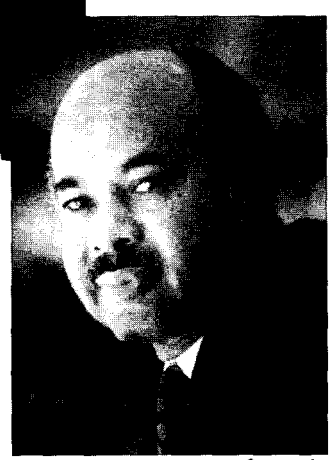
Bagley

Brophy

In addition to affecting the long-term interests of the GOP, the vote last month also raises questions for the Board of Regents. Was it pushed into the political arena against its will over the issue of affirmative action? And is Wilson responsible?

The man at the center of it all — Ward Connerly — says no, insisting Wilson has been on board with his crusade since last August. "I raised this whole question back in August of last year; our first hearing was back in November," Connerly said, noting that Wilson was involved from the get-go. "In August of 1994, with Pete Wilson just beginning to catch up with Kathleen Brown [in governor's race], people would have laughed at the idea of him running for president."

Peltason



Connerly

While he concedes politics did enter the affirmative action debate, he insists the issue does not portend a more overtly political Board of Regents. He also takes care to point out that in this case, the governor was not the only one to use political clout to elbow the regents. "I'm told by one regent that he got a call from [Lieutenant Governor] Gray Davis," Connerly said, launching into a long list of opponents with possible political motives. "Certainly Willie Brown has a political interest; this will play very well in San Francisco. Barbara Lee is running for the Senate. All of those members of the Black caucus and the Legislature have something to gain. So while this did become political, Wilson wasn't the only one with a personal interest, and he wasn't the only one who lobbied."

Connerly also insists the regents' decisions were based on personal beliefs and nothing else. It is true, he said, that most of the regents are strong allies of the governor, yet he doesn't understand how it might be thought that "yes" votes were tantamount to paying back the favor of appointment. He dismisses the notion that the regents are greatly concerned with furthering Wilson's career, and uses himself as a potential case in point: "Everyone knows that I'm a heavy donor to Wilson's [presidential] campaign. How am I repaying the governor by voting the way he wants? If I've given that much to his campaign, haven't I already paid my dues? That argument just doesn't stand up."

Conservative think tanks such as the Pacific Research Institute join Connerly's assessment. "It is true that Pete Wilson is the president of the board, but he's still only one vote," said senior fellow Lance Izumi. "If the regents really felt that what Wilson and Connerly were doing was wrong or purely politically motivated, they didn't have to adopt the resolution. I can't say whether the governor was calling in favors or not, but the fact that he appointed them doesn't mean that they had to vote with him."

While Wilson's defenders maintain he has not corrupted the regents process, others aren't so sure. Tim Hodson, executive director of the Center for California Studies at CSU-Sacramento, was hesitant to speculate on the regent's motivations or future, but he noted that there might be a correlation between the kinds of people a governor appoints as judges and those he appoints as regents. Former Gov. Pat Brown, Hodson says, appointed roughly the same number of Republicans and Democrats to the bench, but all subsequent governors — Ronald Reagan, Jerry Brown, George Deukmejian and Pete Wilson — have chosen the majority of their appointees along party lines.

"Observers have said that once upon a time, it was your standing, your reputation among your peers that got you an appointment," said Hodson. "Now it's more about your political affiliation."

Dave Merkowitz of the American Council on Education in Washington, D.C., said that his organization is concerned about the entry of partisanship and presidential politics into university governance.

"This sort of thing has happened on public boards before, and it does set a dangerous precedent, and it's quite an intrusion," he says, adding that UC is unusual because it is the only university system nationwide in which the state's governor also is a regent. "California has its own traditions, and generally those traditions have worked well, as evidenced by the reputation that the university enjoys. But i'ts dangerous to have this kind of political interference ... [it can] cause its own kind of political reaction."

Wilson, of course, is hoping that reaction is the sort that will transform his presidential campaign, and if it continues, Wilson's stand could make the difference next November. If, on the other hand, Wilson is viewed as having overplayed the race card, the governor could find his success with the regents to be a Pyrrhic victory.

"The governor had a clear political interest in getting the reaction that he did," said Merkowitz. "I don't know if there will be public tolerance for that kind of thing happening very often."

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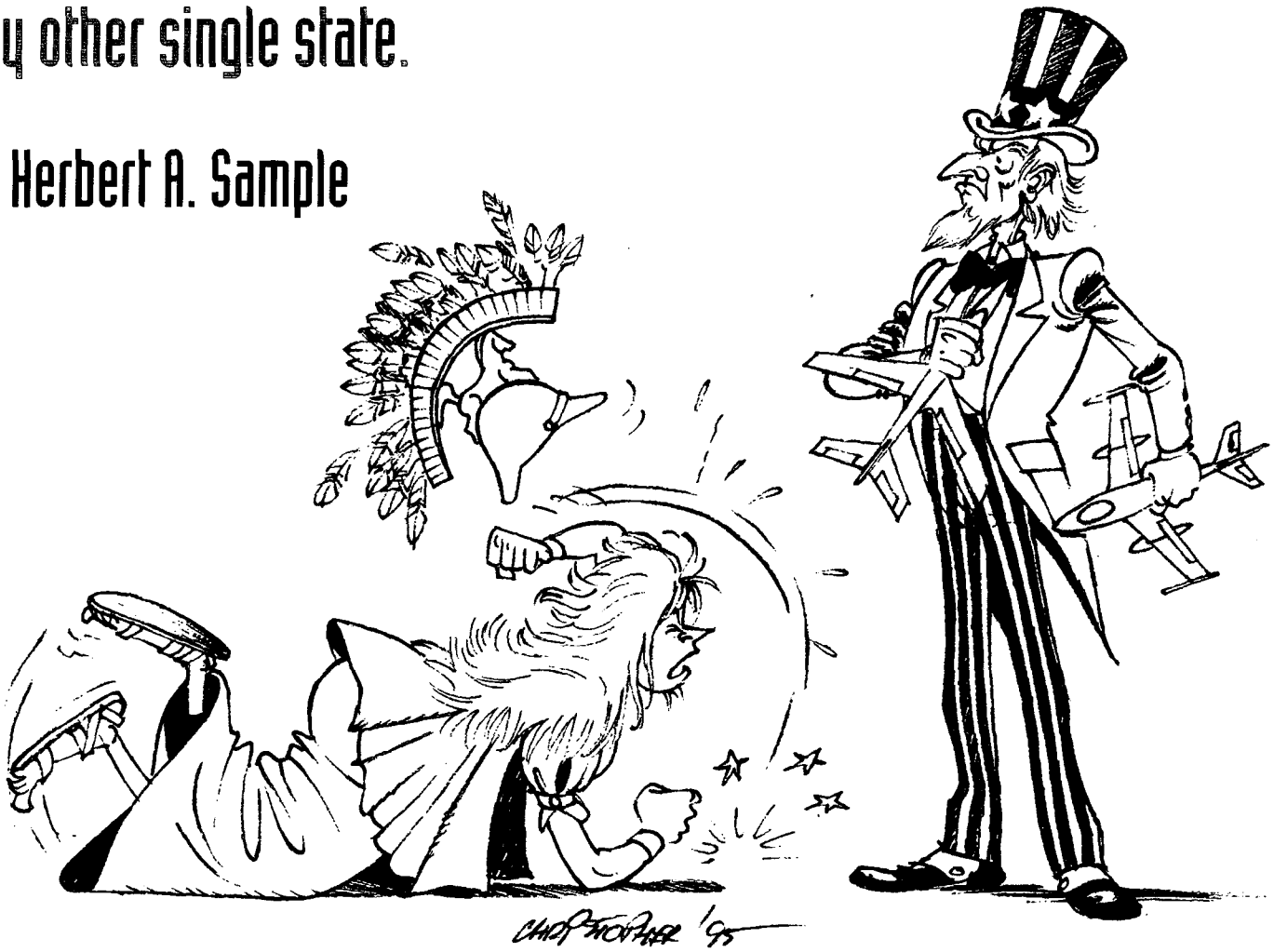
Downsizing California's military-industrial complex

The state took another hit in the recent round of base closures, but California still has near double the number of facilities in any other single state.

By Herbert A. Sample



In 1988, when the first military base-closing commission got down to business, California was home to nearly three times more military facilities than any other state.

Seven sometimes agonizing years have passed since then, and four base-closing panels have come and gone. As a result of their work, nearly 330 installations around the country are to be shut down or substantially

Herbert A. Sample is a reporter in the Washington, D.C., bureau of The Sacramento Bee.

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reduced — 40 of them in California.

To judge from the strident denunciations of the commissions' collective work by a number of state and local politicians, one might come to the quick conclusion that the termination or reduction of so many California bases represents a stark retreat from the state that also will leave it an economic basket case for decades.

But the other side of the coin is that California will continue to be the home of a vast military arsenal and a large military-industrial complex — it just will not be as grand as it once was.

"It's certainly going to hurt. There's no doubt it will cause economic upheaval," said Bruce Allen with the Center for Economic Conversion in Mountain View. But, he added, "generally speaking, we have seen converted bases provide more jobs than they did when the military was operating them."

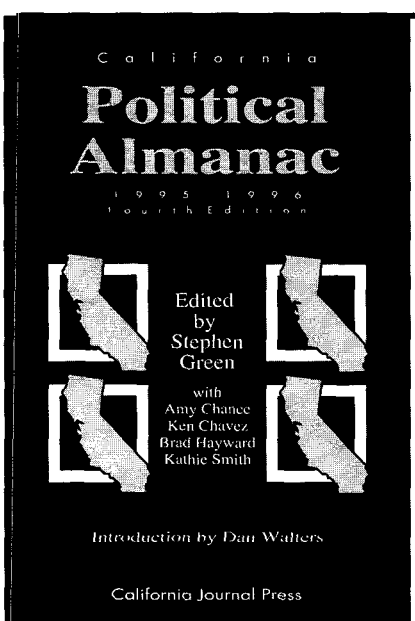
The base-closing commissions of 1988, 1991, 1993 and 1995 ordered the dismantling of many longtime military showpieces in California: Long Beach Naval Shipyard, Mather and McClellan Air Force Bases in Sacramento, Fort Ord in Monterey, Alameda Naval Air Station, The Presidio in San Francisco, Mare Island Naval Shipyard in Vallejo, the San Diego Naval Training Center and Castle Air Force Base in Merced. A few others — such as Onizuka Air Station near Sunnyvale and Sierra Army Depot in Lassen County — will undergo significant "realignment," or shrinkage.

"We were always a Navy town," said a dejected Long Beach Mayor Beverly O'Neill after the commission voted to shut down the naval repair base. "We are not a Navy town anymore."

When all of the closures and realignments finally are concluded, about 55,000 workers at the bases will be laid off or transferred, most to bases in other states but some to California locations. Tens of thousands of other jobs that indirectly depend on the facilities will be impacted, though not necessarily erased.

Many California critics of the base-closing commissions have charged that the state was "unfairly" hit by the panels. Republican Governor Pete Wilson and Democratic U.S. Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer asserted this year that California facilities should have been placed off limits from the panel's purview, citing the numerous closures ordered in prior years and a state economy that continued to demonstrate less-than-rosy performance. Feinstein, in the colorful language she and other skeptics used to pummel the 1995 commission, called the panel "a doomsday machine." Similarly, Wilson said its closure list would "savage California," while Boxer simply said the commission had "run amok."

But as commissioners from the 1993 and 1995 panels have repeatedly pointed out, California was the site of so



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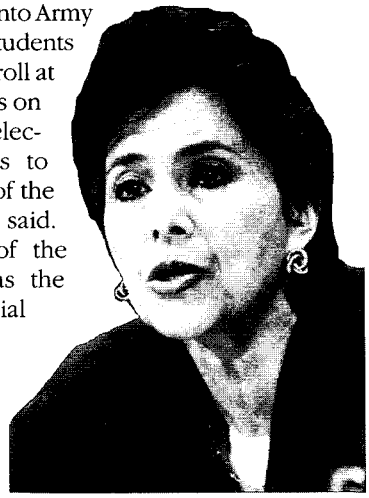
many base closures precisely because it was the site of so many bases. In 1988 California hosted 71 major installations. Virginia, which enjoyed the next largest number of major facilities, was home to 29; Texas boasted 27; Florida, 24. But even after the bases chosen for closure this year finally shut their doors around the turn of the century, 48 major facilities will remain in California — including legendary Edwards Air Force Base in Kern County, a test facility where the space shuttle often lands; Travis Air Force Base in Fairfield; a Navy "megabase" in San Diego; the sprawling Camp Pendleton near Oceanside, where a 35,000-person Marine combat force is housed; Vandenberg Air Force Base in Santa Barbara County; and Fort Irwin in the Mojave Desert, a premier Army training installation. Virginia will be home to 25 facilities by the year 2000, and Texas and Florida will host 20 each.

Furthermore, the military value — or lack thereof — of an installation under consideration for shuttering took precedence over the estimated economic impact of the closure. "The law is clear," said 1995 commission chairman Alan Dixon in a feisty, late-June press conference. "The Department of Defense suggested eight criteria [for evaluating bases]. The Congress did not change it. That's the law ... Economic considerations are a part of the process, but they are not the dominant feature in the process."

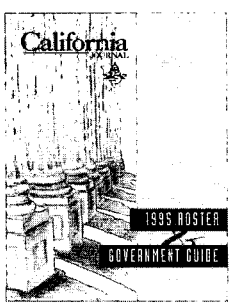
Despite the base closures and the reduction of thousands of civilian and military personnel, California will continue to hold a substantial lead over other states in defense contracting into the foreseeable future. In 1988 the Pentagon paid $23 billion to California firms for everything from supplies to research and development. Last year, even after a lengthy period of Pentagon budget cuts and defense-industry downsizing, military contracts to the state amounted to $22.6 billion. The state with the next largest total, Texas, received $8.1 billion.

While base closures in California will undoubtedly hurt several local communities, its particular affect on the overall state economy is likely to be relatively minor. The 1995 round, for instance, will lead to the direct loss of 19,370 jobs and indirectly impact 22,900 others — only .3 percent of the state's workforce, according to the commission. Many of those jobs will be lost gradually over the next four to five years. Further, conversion efforts are progressing, albeit slowly: Thousands of light-manufacturing jobs are being created at the former Sacramento Army Depot, several thousand students ultimately are expected to enroll at a new state university campus on Fort Ord's old site, and an electric-car manufacturer hopes to build a factory on a portion of the Alameda naval station, Allen said.



Several other sectors of the state's economy — such as the defense industry, commercial aviation, electronics and manufacturing — have laid off many more workers than were lost through base closures. Paul Taibl, a defense analyst with Business Ex-

1995 California Journal ROSTERS



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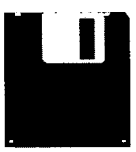

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ecutives for National Security, a Washington think tank, noted that over one million defense-industry jobs have been eliminated around the country in recent years, many more than will be lost from base closures. "And they don't seem to get the attention and comfort that we give base-closure victims," he added.

Californians should be most concerned about pressing their congressional representatives to allocate adequate funds to clean up the sometimes widespread toxic contamination on closed bases and to finance worker-retraining programs — even in a period of fierce budget-cutting in Washington, Allen said. "The federal government created these militarily dependent communities around the nation, and it has an obligation to help them make the transition," he added.

While the 1993 base-closing commission was roundly criticized by California officials for its targeting of several San Francisco Bay Area naval facilities, it was the 1995 panel that generated the harshest comments after it ordered the closure or realignment of nearly a dozen bases in the state. Most were small facilities, but a handful employed thousands of workers, such as McClellan, Onizuka and the Long Beach shipyard.

Boxer and Feinstein, in a number of press conferences, charged that the commissioners were "arrogant" for not adequately considering the statewide and local economic impact of the closures. The two senators joined Wilson to urge President Bill Clinton to reject the commission's closure list and terminate the 1995 round outright. At the same time, several House members from California who represented targeted bases worked feverishly to spare those installations.

But as with many other contentious issues, the California congressional delegation was of more than one mind on base closures. San Diego-area congressmen from both political parties, for example, pushed for the extinction of the Long Beach shipyard because the Navy intends to transfer much of that bases's work to private San Diego repair yards. Some lawmakers, whose districts were unaffected by base closures, saw little need to make it a major issue. Others, such as Representative Ron Dellums (D-Oakland), a longtime critic of defense spending and the ranking Democrat on the House National Security Committee, said that while his district had been severely pained by base closures, he was convinced that the process was "about as fair and nonpartisan as it can be."

Some defense analysts saw criticism of the commission's closure list by Californians as an expected, if not necessary, part of the political process. Politicians "are going to make the case that their workers have been impacted hard and deserve special consideration," said Taibl. "But you have to look to something like the commission to rise above that individual political clamor and take the national view that if there is excess infrastructure, it is going to have to be cut."

Other analysts were less charitable. Baker Spring, who watches defense issues for the Heritage Foundation, said that Boxer, a veteran critic of defense spending, must recognize that base closures are "the inevitable result of positions she's taken in the past about reducing personnel levels. She cannot run away from the positions she's taken in the past."

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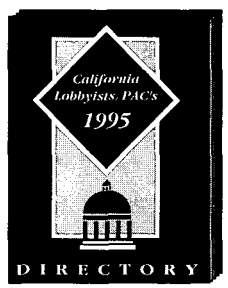

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Washington Notes

PERSPECTIVE

By Marc Sandalow

A Beltway view of California's own

Anyone interested in seeing California through a Washington lens should put down their Tom Clancy and John Grisham beach novels and pick up a copy of the *Almanac of American Politics 1996*. The dense tome is a favorite of the Capitol's politically obsessed, with its detailed, if not exactly gripping, district-by-district analysis of every congressional seat in the nation.

"California may be recovering, but it remains in a sour mood," declares author Michael Barone, whose 1500-page opus sits on the desk of nearly every lawmaker, lobbyist, journalist and strategist in town. The state's problem, Barone writes in the just-released 1996 edition, "is less economic than one of morale, and morals... The loudest noise on many California streets is the dweep of car alarms being activated and the click of house alarm systems being disarmed."

Sweeping generalizations not withstanding, the book provides a fascinating view of the nation's largest congressional delegation. The 150 pages dedicated to the Golden State reinforce the Eastern view of California as a rich, yet troubled electoral gold mine, with constituencies so diverse and regions so disparate that it almost constitutes a kingdom unto itself.

San Francisco is described as a "sometimes daffily leftish city," while San Diego, Barone writes, "should be paradise, but politically ... has been in a foul temper in the 1990s, kicking out incumbents of both parties all over town." Denizens of West Los Angeles are mocked for believing "promiscuous sex and drug use are OK, but smoking cigarettes and failing to exercise are wrong."

But after indulging in such irresistible cliches, Barone cautions against dismissing the entire state as a bunch of self-righteous elites searching for an existential purpose. "People from back East looking for clues about California might consider avoiding Beverly Hills and Nob Hill and taking a look at Stockton," he writes, alerting readers to the growing political schism between residents of the coast and those in the central parts of the state.

Perhaps a bit stereotyped, perhaps a bit overstated, it is nevertheless the lens through which many policy makers in the east will view California. Considered the "Bible of American politics," countless civics wonks will rely on its insights until the next edition hits the stands two years from now. And they will be treated to the kind of nuggets that journalists long for on deadline, such as Pete Stark (D-Oakland) placing a giant peace symbol atop the Walnut Creek bank he started and emblazing peace symbols on all checks; Ken Calvert's (R-Riverside) Hugh Grant-style problem with a prostitute; or Dana Rohrabacher's (R-Huntington Beach) devotion to surfing.

Published by the Washington-based *National Journal*, the book contains rankings of each member's voting record based on a somewhat subjective list of key votes from the last Congress. Surprisingly, Ron Dellums (D-Oakland), whom Barone praises for his dignity as former chair of the National Security Committee, does not emerge as the number one liberal. That honor belongs to Stark, his neighbor, and to Xavier Becerra (D-Los Angeles). Dellums is not far behind, along with Nancy Pelosi (D-San Francisco), Lynn Woolsey (D-Marin), Sam Farr (D-Carmel), Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-Los Angeles) and Bob Filner (D-San Diego).

The Democrat with the most conservative voting record is Gary Condit (D-Ceres), whom Barone notes has a *National Journal* vote rating "nearly identical" to Republican Michael Huffington, who gave up his Santa Barbara seat in 1994 in a failed quest for the U.S. Senate.

On the Republican side, there is no surprise that Bob Dornan (R-Garden Grove) — described as "loud and pugnacious and impossible to ignore" — is atop the list. He is joined as the state's top conservative by a quartet of Northern Californians, including Wally Herger (R-Redding), John Doolittle (R-Roseville), Bill Baker (R-Danville) and Richard Pombo (R-Stockton). Just behind is Duncan Hunter (R-San Diego), of whom Barone writes "is the House member who comes closest in substantive views to Patrick Buchanan."

For the most part, the book is remarkably even handed, although Barone — who was married to the late daughter of Democratic Party financier Walter Shorenstein — saves his strongest praise for Democrats who still hold a slight edge in the state's delegation. Robert Matsui (D-Sacramento) is "one of the most influential House Democrats on a number of important issues... Without him," Barone writes, "NAFTA might not have passed." Howard Berman (D-Los Angeles) is toasted as "one of the most aggressive and creative members of the House — and one of the most clear-sighted operators in American politics." And the strongest praise goes to Henry Waxman (D-Los Angeles), whom Barone calls "one of the ablest members of the House and for 16 years was one of the most powerful, a shrewd political operator who is a skilled and idealistic policy entrepreneur."

Praise on the GOP side is harder to find, although Barone appears to have a soft spot for Sonny Bono (R-Palm Springs), portraying him as something of a know-nothing political genius in the mold of Chancey Gardner in the movie "Being There." "(B)ehind his seeming klutziness is a sense of humor that suggests a shrewdness as well," Barone writes of the former singer, mayor and husband to Cher.

The California delegation stands out for its incredible diversity, from Jay Kim (R-Diamond Bar), who left his home in Korea in his twenties, to Calvin Dooley (D-Hanford), whose ancestors began tilling the Central Valley in the 1800s. And yet a careful read shows that most share a similar political background. More than 70 percent of the state's 52 representatives and two senators were elected to either local government or to the Legislature before being sent to Washington.

When it comes to prognosticating, Barone is careful to hedge his bets. "Where is California headed?" Barone asks. "In partisan terms, toward Republicans, but not by any wide margin, and not irrevocably."

Marc Sandalow is a Washington correspondent for the San Francisco Chronicle.

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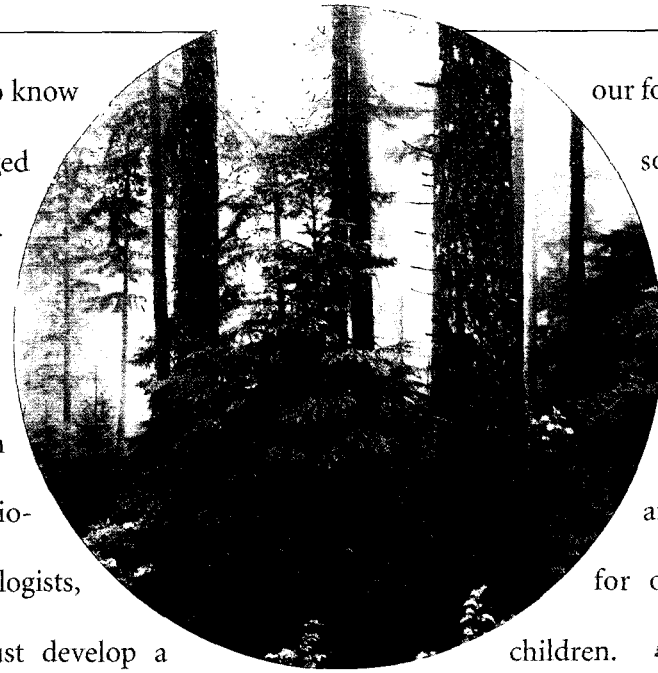

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